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THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

AUTHORISED EDITION.

FOURTH SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

57 VICTORIÆ.

VOLUME XXII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE TWELFTH DAY OF MARCH

TO

THE NINTH DAY OF APRIL,

1894.

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1894.

ERRATUM.

12 *March*. Page 15, line 27 from top, "simply" read "*amply*."



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THE MINISTRY

OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL ROSEBERY, K.G.
AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION ON THE 12TH MARCH 1894.

THE CABINET.

First Lord of the Treasury and Lord President of the Council	Right Hon. Earl of ROSEBERY, K.G.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. Lord HERSCHELL.
Lord Privy Seal	Right Hon. Lord TWEEDMOUTH.
Secretary of State, Home Department	Right Hon. HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs	Right Hon. Earl of KIMBERLEY, K.G.
Secretary of State for the Colonies	Right Hon. Marquess of RIPON, K.G.
Secretary of State for War	Right Hon. HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.
Secretary of State for India	Right Hon. HENRY H. FOWLER.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. Sir WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Right Hon. Earl SPENCER, K.G.
President of the Board of Trade	Right Hon. ANTHONY JOHN MUNDELLA.
First Commissioner of Works and Public Buildings	Right Hon. H. GLADSTONE.
Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant	Right Hon. JOHN MORLEY.
Secretary for Scotland and Vice President of the Scotch Education Department	Right Hon. Sir GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN, Bart.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Right Hon. JAMES BRYCE.
President of the Local Government Board	Right Hon. GEORGE J. SHAW LEFEVRE.
Postmaster General	Right Hon. ARNOLD MORLEY.
Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education	Right Hon. A. H. DYKE ACLAND.

NOT IN THE CABINET.

Field Marshal Commanding in Chief	H.R.H. the Duke of CAMBRIDGE, K.G.
President of the Board of Agriculture	Right Hon. HERBERT GARDNER.
Lords of the Treasury	{ RICHARD KNIGHT CAUSTON, Esq. WILLIAM A. MCARTHUR, Esq. RONALD CRAUFORD MUNRO-FERGUSON, Esq.
Lords of the Admiralty	{ Admiral Sir FREDERICK WILLIAM RICHARDS, K.C.B. Rear Admiral The Lord WALTER TALBOT KERR. Rear Admiral JOHN ARBUTHNOT FISHER, C.B. Captain GERARD HENRY UCTRED NOEL, R.N. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Esq.
Joint Secretaries to the Treasury	{ THOMAS E. ELLIS, Esq. Right Hon. Sir JOHN TOMLINSON HIBBERT, K.C.B.
Secretary to the Admiralty	Right Hon. Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Bart.
Secretary to the Board of Trade	THOMAS BURT, Esq.
Secretary to the Local Government Board	Sir WALTER FOSTER.
Under Secretary, Home Department	GEORGE WILLIAM ERSKINE RUSSELL, Esq.
Under Secretary, Foreign Department	Sir EDWARD GREY, Bart.
Under Secretary for the Colonies	SYDNEY CHARLES BUXTON, Esq.
Under Secretary for War	Lord SANDHURST.
Under Secretary for India	Lord REAY.
Paymaster General	Right Hon. CHARLES SEALE-HAYNE.
Financial Secretary to the War Department	WILLIAM WOODALL, Esq.
Judge Advocate General	Right Hon. Sir FRANCIS H. JEUNE.
Attorney General	Sir CHARLES RUSSELL.
Solicitor General	Sir JOHN RIGBY.

SCOTLAND.

Lord Advocate	Right Hon. JOHN BLAIR BALFOUR.
Solicitor General	ALEXANDER ASHER, Esq.

IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	Right Hon. Lord HOUGHTON, K.P.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. SAMUEL WALKER.
Attorney General	Right Hon. THE MACDERMOTT.
Solicitor General	Serjeant HEMPHILL.

QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD.

Lord Steward	Marquess of BREADALBANE.
Lord Chamberlain	Right Hon. Lord CARRINGTON, G.C.M.G.
Master of the Horse	Right Hon. Earl of CORK.
Treasurer of the Household	Earl of CHESTERFIELD.
Comptroller of the Household	GEORGE LEVESON-GOWER, Esq.
Vice Chamberlain of the Household	Right Hon. CHARLES R. SPENCER.
Captain of the Corps of Gentlemen at Arms	Right Hon. Earl of CHESTERFIELD.
Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard	Right Hon. Lord KENSINGTON.
Master of the Buckhounds	Lord RIBBLESDALE.
Chief Equerry and Clerk Marshal	Colonel Sir G. A. MAUDE, V.C., K.C.B.
Mistress of the Robes	

ROLL OF THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

IN
THE THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
IRELAND.

58^d VICTORIÆ, 1894.

MEM.—*According to the Usage of Parliament, when the House appoints a Select Committee, the Lords appointed to serve upon it are named in the Order of their Rank, beginning with the Highest; and so, when the House sends a Committee to a Conference with the Commons, the Lord highest in Rank is called first, and the rest go forth in like Order: But when the Whole House is called over for any Purpose within the House, or for the Purpose of proceeding forth to Westminster Hall, or upon any public Solemnity, the Call begins invariably with the Junior Baron.*

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.	His Royal Highness George William Frederick Charles Duke of Cambridge.
His Royal Highness Alfred Ernest Albert Duke of Edinburgh.	Edward White Archbishop of Canterbury.
His Royal Highness Arthur William Patrick Albert Duke of Connaught and Strathearn.	Farrer Lord Herschell, <i>Lord High Chancellor.</i>
His Royal Highness George Frederick Ernest Albert Duke of York.	William Dalrymple Archbishop of York.
His Royal Highness Leopold Charles Edward George Albert Duke of Albany	Archibald Philip Lord Rosebery (<i>Earl of Rosebery</i>). <i>Lord President of the Council.</i>
	Edward Lord Tweedmouth, <i>Lord Privy Seal.</i>

ROLL OF THE LORDS

Henry Duke of Norfolk, <i>Earl Marshal of England.</i>	Hugh de Grey Marquess of Hertford.
Algernon Percy Banks Duke of Somerset.	John Patrick Marquess of Bute.
Charles Henry Duke of Richmond.	William Alleyne Marquess of Exeter.
Augustus Charles Lennox Duke of Grafton.	William Marquess of Northampton.
Henry Charles Fitzroy Duke of Beaufort.	John Charles Marquess Camden.
William Amelius Aubrey De Vere Duke of Saint Albans.	Henry Marquess of Anglesey.
George Godolphin Duke of Leeds.	George Henry Hugh Marquess of Cholmondeley.
Herbrand Arthur Duke of Bedford.	George William Thomas Marquess of Ailesbury.
Spencer Compton Duke of Devonshire.	Frederick William John Marquess of Bristol.
Charles Richard John Duke of Marlborough.	Archibald Marquess of Ailsa.
John James Robert Duke of Rutland.	Constantine Charles Henry Marquess of Normanby.
William Alexander Louis Stephen Duke of Brandon. (<i>Duke of Hamilton.</i>)	George Frederick Samuel Marquess of Ripon.
William John Arthur Charles James Duke of Portland.	William Marquess of Abergavenny.
William Angus Drogo Duke of Manchester.	Gavin Marquess of Breadalbane. (<i>In another Place as Lord Steward of the Household.</i>)
Henry Pelham Archibald Douglas Duke of Newcastle.	Frederick Temple Marquess of Dufferin and Ava.
Algernon George Duke of Northumberland.	Lawrence Marquess of Zetland.
His Royal Highness Ernest Augustus William Adolphus George Frederick Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale.	Charles Henry John Earl of Shrewsbury.
Henry Duke of Wellington.	Frederick Arthur Earl of Derby.
Cromartie Duke of Sutherland.	Warner Francis John Plantagenet Earl of Huntingdon.
Hugh Lupus Duke of Westminster.	George Robert Charles Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.
Alexander William George Duke of Fife.	Henry Hugh Earl of Devon.
George Douglas Duke of Argyll.	Henry Charles Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire.
Gavin Marquess of Breadalbane, <i>Lord Steward of the Household.</i>	Rudolph Robert Basil Aloysius Augustine Earl of Denbigh.
Augustus John Henry Beaumont Marquess of Winchester.	Anthony Mildmay Julian Earl of Westmorland.
Henry Charles Keith Marquess of Lansdowne.	Montague Earl of Lindsey.
John Villiers Stuart Marquess Townshend.	William Earl of Stamford.
Robert Arthur Talbot Marquess of Salisbury.	Murray Edward Gordon Earl of Winchelsea and Nottingham.
John Alexander Marquess of Bath.	Edwyn Francis Earl of Chesterfield.
James Marquess of Abercorn. (<i>Duke of Abercorn.</i>)	Edward George Henry Earl of Sandwich.
	George Devereux De Vere Earl of Essex.
	George James Earl of Carlisle.

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL.

William Henry Walter Earl of Doncaster. (<i>Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.</i>)	Francis Richard Charles Guy Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick.
Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury.	Sidney Carr Earl of Buckinghamshire.
Randal Mowbray Thomas Earl of Berkeley.	William Thomas Spencer Earl Fitz- william.
Montagu Arthur Earl of Abingdon.	Frederick George Earl of Guilford.
Aldred Frederick George Beresford Earl of Scarbrough.	Charles Philip Earl of Hardwicke.
William Coutts Earl of Albemarle.	Henry Edward Earl of Ilchester.
George William Earl of Coventry.	Reginald Windsor Earl De La Warr.
Victor Albert George Earl of Jersey.	William Earl of Radnor.
William Henry Earl Poulett.	John Poyntz Earl Spencer.
John Francis Erskine Earl of Mar. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Seymour Henry Earl Bathurst.
Sholto George Watson Earl of Morton. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Arthur Wills John Wellington Trumbull Blundell Earl of Hillsborough. (<i>Marquess of Downshire.</i>)
Walter John Francis Earl of Mar and Kellie. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Edward Hyde Earl of Clarendon.
George Earl of Haddington. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	William David Earl of Mansfield.
Frederick Henry Earl of Lauderdale. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	John James Hugh Henry Earl Strange. (<i>Duke of Atholl.</i>)
John Trotter Earl of Lindsay. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	William Henry Earl of Mount Edgumbe.
David Stanley William Earl of Airlie. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Hugh Earl Fortescue.
Robert Harris Carnwath Earl of Carn- wath. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Earl of Carnarvon.
Ronald Ruthven Earl of Leven and Melville. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	George Henry Earl Cadogan.
Douglas Mackinnon Baillie Hamilton Earl of Dundonald. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Edward James Earl of Malmesbury.
Sewallis Edward Earl Ferrers.	John Vansittart Danvers Earl of Lanes- borough. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
William Heneage Earl of Dartmouth.	Henry Ernest Newcomen Earl of Kingston. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Charles Earl of Tankerville.	Dermot Robert Wyndham Earl of Mayo. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Charles Wightwick Earl of Aylesford.	Hugh Earl Annesley. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Francis Thomas de Grey Earl Cowper.	George Earl of Lucan. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Arthur Philip Earl Stanhope.	Somerset Richard Earl of Belmore. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Thomas Augustus Wolstenholme Earl of Macclesfield.	James Francis Earl of Bandon. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Douglas Beresford Malise Ronald Earl Graham. (<i>Duke of Montrose.</i>)	James Earl of Caledon. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
William Frederick Earl Waldegrave.	James Francis Harry Earl of Rosslyn.
Bertram Earl of Ashburnham.	William George Robert Earl of Craven.
Charles Augustus Earl of Harrington.	William Hillier Earl of Onslow.
Newton Earl of Portsmouth.	Charles Earl of Romney.
	Walter John Earl of Chichester.

ROLL OF THE LORDS

Seymour John Grey Earl of Wilton.	Charles William Francis Earl of Gainsborough.
George Charles Earl of Powis.	Francis Charles Granville Earl of Ellesmere.
Horatio Earl Nelson.	George Henry Charles Earl of Strafford.
Lawrence Earl of Rosse. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)	Kenelm Charles Edward Earl of Cottenham.
Sydney William Herbert Earl Manvers.	William Henry Earl Cowley.
Horatio Earl of Orford.	George Arnulph Earl of Winton. (<i>Earl of Eglintoun.</i>)
Henry Earl Grey.	William Humble Earl of Dudley.
Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.	John Francis Stanley Earl Russell.
Dudley Francis Stuart Earl of Harrowby.	John Earl of Kimberley.
Henry Ulick Earl of Harewood.	Richard Earl of Dartrey.
Gilbert John Earl of Minto.	William Ernest Earl of Feversham.
Alan Frederick Earl Cathcart.	Henry George Earl of Ravensworth.
James Walter Earl of Verulam.	Edward Montagu Stuart Granville Earl of Wharnccliffe.
Adelbert Wellington Brownlow Earl Brownlow.	Thomas George Earl of Northbrook.
Henry Cornwallis Earl of St. Germans.	Herbert John Earl Cairns.
Albert Edmund Earl of Morley.	Victor Alexander George Robert Earl of Lytton.
Orlando George Charles Earl of Bradford.	Edward Earl of Lathom.
William Earl Beauchamp.	George Watson Earl Sondes.
John Earl of Eldon.	Roundell Earl of Selborne.
Richard William Penn Earl Howe.	Walter Stafford Earl of Iddesleigh.
George Edward John Mowbray Earl of Stradbroke.	Cornwallis Earl de Montalt.
William Stephen Earl Temple of Stowe.	William Henry Forester Earl of Londesborough.
Francis Charles Earl of Kilmorey. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)	Gathorne Earl of Cranbrook.
Charles Stewart Earl Vane. (<i>Marquess of Londonderry.</i>)	Gilbert Henry Earl of Ancaster.
William Archer Earl Amherst.	Robert Viscount Hereford.
John Frederick Vaughan Earl Cawdor.	Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and, 'St. John.
William George Earl of Munster.	Evelyn Edward Thomas Viscount Falmouth.
Robert Adam Philips Haldane Earl of Camperdown.	George Master Viscount Torrington.
Thomas Francis Earl of Lichfield.	Maurice Viscount Leinster. (<i>Duke of Leinster.</i>)
John George Earl of Durham.	Francis Wheler Viscount Hood.
Granville George Earl Granville.	Mervyn Edward Viscount Powerscourt. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Henry Earl of Effingham.	Henry William Crosbie Viscount Bangor. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Henry John Earl of Ducie.	Cornwallis Viscount Hawarden. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>) (<i>In another Place as Earl de Montalt.</i>)
Charles Alfred Worsley Earl of Yarborough.	
Henry John Earl Innes. (<i>Duke of Roxburghe.</i>)	
Thomas William Earl of Leicester.	
Ralph Gordon Earl of Lovelace.	

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL.

Carnegie Parker Viscount St. Vincent.	Alwyne Bishop of Ely.
Henry Viscount Melville.	James Bishop of Manchester.
William Wells Viscount Sidmouth.	William Walsham Bishop of Wakefield.
Henry Edward Montagu Dorington	Francis John Bishop of Chester.
Clotworthy Viscount Templetown.	Alfred George Bishop of St. Asaph.
(<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)	Daniel Lewis Bishop of Bangor.
John Campbell Viscount Gordon.	John Wogan Bishop of St. Albans.
(<i>Earl of Aberdeen.</i>)	Charles Robert Lord Carrington, <i>Lord</i>
Edward Fleetwood John Viscount	<i>Chamberlain of the Household.</i>
Exmouth.	Dudley Charles Lord de Ros.
John Luke George Viscount Hutchin-	Charles Botolph Joseph Lord Mowbray.
son. (<i>Earl of Donoughmore.</i>)	George Manners Lord Hastings.
William Frederick Viscount Clancarty.	Edward Southwell Lord de Clifford.
(<i>Earl of Clancarty.</i>)	Charles Henry Rolle Lord Clinton.
Robert Wellington Viscount Combermere.	Robert Nathaniel Cecil George Lord
Henry Charles Viscount Canterbury.	Zouche of Haryngworth.
Rowland Clegg Viscount Hill.	Rawdon George Grey Lord Grey de
Charles Stewart Viscount Hardinge.	Ruthyn.
George Stephens Viscount Gough.	Charles Edward Hastings Lord Botreaux.
Charles Lindley Viscount Halifax.	(<i>Earl of Loudoun.</i>)
Alexander Nelson Viscount Bridport.	Francis Robert Lord Camoys.
William Henry Berkeley Viscount	Miles Lord Beaumont.
Portman.	Henry Lord Willoughby de Broke.
Henry Robert Viscount Hampden.	Hubert George Charles Lord Vaux of
Garnet Joseph Viscount Wolseley.	Harrowden.
William John Viscount Oxenbridge.	Ralph Gordon Lord Wentworth. (<i>In</i>
Richard Assheton Viscount Cross.	<i>another Place as Earl of Lovelace.</i>)
Frederick Bishop of London.	Alfred Thomas Townshend Lord Braye.
Brooke Foss Bishop of Durham.	Robert George Lord Windsor.
Anthony Wilson Bishop of Winchester.	William Henry John Lord North.
Charles John Bishop of Gloucester and	Beauchamp Moubray Lord St. John of
Bristol.	Bletso.
James Bishop of Hereford.	Frederick George Lord Howard de
Arthur Charles Bishop of Bath and	Walden.
Wells.	Bernard Henry Philip Lord Petre.
Richard Bishop of Chichester.	John Fiennes Lord Saye and Sele.
William Basil Bishop of St. David's.	John Francis Lord Arundell of Wardour.
John Charles Bishop of Liverpool.	John Stuart Lord Clifton (<i>Earl of</i>
Ernest Roland Bishop of Newcastle.	<i>Darnley.</i>)
Richard Bishop of Llandaff.	John Baptist Joseph Lord Dormer.
William Bishop of Oxford.	Henry John Philip Sidney Lord
George Bishop of Southwell.	Teynham.
William Boyd Bishop of Ripon.	Fitz-Osbert Lord Stafford.
Edward Bishop of Lincoln.	George Frederick William Lord Byron.
John Bishop of Salisbury.	Lewis Henry Hugh Lord Clifford of
	Chudleigh.

ROLL OF THE LORDS

Henry de Vere Lord Barnard.	George Augustus Hamilton Lord Fisherwick. (<i>Marquess of Donegall.</i>)
Horace Courtenay Gammell Lord Forbes. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Henry Charles Lord Gage. (<i>Viscount Gage.</i>)
Alexander William Frederick Lord Saltoun. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Thomas John Lord Thurlow.
Charles William Lord Sinclair. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	William Morton Lord Auckland.
Alexander Hugh Lord Balfour of Burleigh. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Charles George Lord Lyttelton.
Walter Hugh Lord Polwarth. (<i>Elected for Scotland.</i>)	Henry George Lord Mendip. (<i>Viscount Clifden.</i>)
Richard Edmund Saint Lawrence Lord Boyle. (<i>Earl of Cork and Orrery.</i>)	George Lord Stuart of Castle Stuart. (<i>Earl of Moray.</i>)
George Lord Hay. (<i>Earl of Kinnoul.</i>)	Alan Plantagenet Lord Stewart of Garlies. (<i>Earl of Galloway.</i>)
Digby Wentworth Bayard Lord Middleton.	James George Henry Lord Saltersford. (<i>Earl of Courtown.</i>)
Frederick George Brabazon Lord Ponsonby. (<i>Earl of Bessborough.</i>)	William Lord Brodrick. (<i>Viscount Midleton.</i>)
Alfred Nathaniel Holden Lord Scarsdale.	Augustus Cholmondeley Lord Calthorpe.
George Florance Lord Boston.	Peter Robert Lord Gwydir.
Charles George Lord Lovell and Holland. (<i>Earl of Egmont.</i>)	Charles Robert Lord Carrington. (<i>In another Place as Lord Chamberlain of the Household.</i>)
George William Henry Lord Vernon.	William Henry Lord Bolton.
Edward Henry Trafalgar Lord Digby.	Thomas Lyttelton Lord Lilford.
Martin Bladen Lord Hawke.	Thomas Lord Ribblesdale.
Henry Thomas Lord Foley.	John William Lord Dunsany. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Arthur de Cardonnel Lord Dinevor.	Edward Donough Lord Inchiquin. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Thomas Lord Walsingham.	William Charles Lord Carbery. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
William Lord Bagot.	John Thomas William Lord Massy. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Charles Henry Lord Southampton.	Hamilton Matthew Fitzmaurice Lord Muskerry. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
John Richard Brinsley Lord Grantley.	Francis William Lord Kilmaine. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
George Bridges Harley Dennett Lord Rodney.	Charles Mark Lord Headley. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Henry George Lord Lovaine. (<i>Earl Percy.</i>)	Edward Henry Churchill Lord Crofton. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Philip Reginald Lord Somers.	Hercules Edward Lord Langford. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Richard Henry Lord Berwick.	Dayrolles Blakeney Lord Ventry. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
Edward Lennox Lord Sherborne.	Henry O'Callaghan Lord Dunalley. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
John Henry De La Poer Lord Tyrone. (<i>Marquess of Waterford.</i>)	
Richard Henry Lord Carleton. (<i>Earl of Shannon.</i>)	
Charles Lord Suffield.	
Dudley Wilmot Lord Dorchester.	
Lloyd Lord Kenyon.	
Charles Cornwallis Lord Braybrooke.	

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL.

Eyre Challoner Henry Lord Clarina. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)	Orlando Watkin Weld Lord Forester.
John Henry Lord Loftus. (<i>Marquess of Ely.</i>)	John William Lord Rayleigh.
William Lord Carysfort. (<i>Earl of Carysfort.</i>)	Edric Frederic Lord Gifford.
George Ralph Lord Abereromby.	Hubert George Lord Somerhill. (<i>Marquess of Clanricarde.</i>)
Charles Towry Hamilton Lord Ellenborough.	James Ludovic Lord Wigan. (<i>Earl of Crawford.</i>)
Augustus Frederick Arthur Lord Sandys.	Uchter John Mark Lord Ranfurly. (<i>Earl of Ranfurly.</i>)
Henry North Lord Sheffield. (<i>Earl of Sheffield.</i>)	John Byrne Leicester Lord De Tabley.
William Macnaghten Lord Erskine.	Charles Stuart Henry Lord Tenterden.
George John Lord Monteagle. (<i>Marquess of Sligo.</i>)	William Conyngham Lord Plunket.
Bernard Arthur William Patrick Hastings Lord Granard. (<i>Earl of Granard.</i>)	William Frederick Lord Heytesbury.
———— Lord Gardner.	Archibald Philip Lord Rosebery. (<i>Earl of Rosebery.</i>) (<i>In another Place as Lord President of the Council.</i>)
John Thomas Lord Manners.	Richard James Lord Clanwilliam. (<i>Earl of Clanwilliam.</i>)
John Adrian Louis Lord Hopetoun. (<i>Earl of Hopetoun.</i>)	William Draper Mortimer Lord Wynford.
Charles Lord Meldrum. (<i>Marquess of Huntly.</i>)	Charles Gore Lord Kilmarnock. (<i>Earl of Erroll.</i>)
Lowry Egerton Lord Grinstead. (<i>Earl of Enniskillen.</i>)	Arthur James Francis Lord Fingall. (<i>Earl of Fingall.</i>)
William Hale John Charles Lord Foxford. (<i>Earl of Limerick.</i>)	William Philip Lord Sefton. (<i>Earl of Sefton.</i>)
Victor Albert Francis Charles Lord Churchill.	Charles Lord Clements. (<i>Earl of Leitrim.</i>)
George Robert Canning Lord Harris.	Thomas Lord Kenlis. (<i>Marquess of Headfort.</i>)
Reginald Charles Edward Lord Colchester.	Reginald Lord Chaworth. (<i>Earl of Meath.</i>)
Schomberg Henry Lord Ker. (<i>Marquess of Lothian.</i>)	Charles Adolphus Lord Dunmore. (<i>Earl of Dunmore.</i>)
Henry Francis Lord Minster. (<i>Marquess Conyngham.</i>)	Augustus Frederick George Warwick Lord Poltimore.
James Edward William Theobald Lord Ormonde. (<i>Marquess of Ormonde.</i>)	Llewelyn Nevill Vaughan Lord Mostyn.
Francis Richard Lord Wemyss. (<i>Earl of Wemyss.</i>)	Henry Spencer Lord Templemore.
John Strange Lord Clanbrassill. (<i>Earl of Roden.</i>)	Valentine Frederick Lord Cloncurry.
Thomas Lord Silchester. (<i>Earl of Longford.</i>)	James St. Vincent Lord De Saumarez.
Clotworthy John Eyre Lord Oriel. (<i>Viscount Massereene.</i>)	Thomas Lord Denman.
Hugh Lord Delamere.	James Yorke MacGregor Lord Abinger.
	Philip Lord De L'Isle and Dudley.
	Francis Denzil Edward Lord Ashburton.
	Edward George Percy Lord Hatherton.

ROLL OF THE LORDS

Archibald Brabazon Sparrow Lord Worlingham. (<i>Earl of Gosford.</i>)	Charles Compton William Lord Chesham.
Hallyburton George Lord Stratheden.	Frederic Augustus Lord Chelmsford.
Geoffrey Dominick Augustus Frederick Lord Oranmore and Browne. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)	John Lord Churston.
Simon Joseph Lord Lovat.	Henry Lord Leconfield.
William Bateman Lord Bateman.	Wilbraham Lord Egerton.
Algernon Hawkins Thomond Lord Kintore. (<i>Earl of Kintore.</i>)	Godfrey Charles Lord Tredegar.
George Ponsonby Lord Lismore. (<i>Viscount Lismore.</i>)	Fitz Patrick Henry Lord Lyveden.
Derrick Warner William Lord Rossmore.	Henry Charles Lord Brougham and Vaux.
Robert Shapland George Julian Lord Carew.	Arthur Fitz-Gerald Lord Kinnaird.
Charles Frederick Ashley Cooper Lord De Mauley.	Richard Luttrell Pilkington Lord Westbury.
Arthur Lord Wrottesley.	Francis William Fitzhardinge Lord Fitzhardinge.
Charles Douglas Richard Lord Sudeley.	Luke Lord Annaly.
Paul Sanford Lord Methuen.	Robert Offley Ashburton Lord Houghton.
Henry Edward John Lord Stanley of Alderley.	John Gaspard Le Marchant Lord Romilly.
William Henry Lord Leigh.	James Herbert Gustavus Meredyth Lord Meredyth. (<i>Lord Athlumney.</i>)
Beilby Lord Wenlock.	Windham Thomas Lord Kenry. (<i>Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl.</i>)
William Lord Lurgan.	Charles Stanley Lord Monck. (<i>Viscount Monck.</i>)
Thomas Spring Lord Monteagle of Brandon.	John Major Lord Hartismere. (<i>Lord Henniker.</i>)
John Reginald Upton Lord Seaton.	Hedworth Hylton Lord Hylton.
John Manley Arbuthnot Lord Keane.	George Sholto Gordon Lord Penrhyn.
John Lord Oxenfoord. (<i>Earl of Stair.</i>)	Gustavus Russell Lord Brancepeth. (<i>Viscount Boyne.</i>)
George Crespigny Brabazon Lord Vivian.	John Henry Lord Kesteven.
Henry William Lord Congleton.	Arthur Lord Ormathwaite.
Victor Alexander Lord Elgin. (<i>Earl of Elgin and Kincardine.</i>)	Edward Lord O'Neill.
Thomas Montague Morrison Lord Truro.	Robert William Lord Napier.
Arthur Lord De Freyne.	Jenico William Joseph Lord Gormanston. (<i>Viscount Gormanston.</i>)
Edward Burtenshaw Lord Saint Leonards.	Thomas Kane Lord Rathdonnell. (<i>Elected for Ireland.</i>)
George Fitz-Roy Henry Lord Raglan.	John Hamilton Lord Lawrence.
Valentine Augustus Lord Kenmare. (<i>Earl of Kenmare.</i>)	James Plaisted Lord Penzance.
Henry Lord Belper.	John Lord Dunning. (<i>Lord Rollo.</i>)
Richard Wogan Lord Talbot de Malahide.	James Lord Balinhard. (<i>Earl of Southesk.</i>)
Robert Wellesley Lord Ebury.	William Lord Hare. (<i>Earl of Listowel.</i>)
	Francis Edward Lord Howard of Glossop.

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL.

Bernard Edward Barnaby Lord Castle- town.	Arthur Oliver Villiers Lord Ampthill.
John Emerich Edward Lord Acton.	William Montagu Lord Tweeddale. (<i>Marquess of Tweeddale.</i>)
Thomas Charles Lord Robartes.	William Ulick Tristram Lord Howth. (<i>Earl of Howth.</i>)
Frederick Lord Wolverton.	Donald James Lord Reay.
Algernon William Fulke Lord Greville.	Harcourt Lord Derwent.
Thomas Towneley Lord O'Hagan.	Henry James Lord Hothfield.
William Lord Sandhurst.	Edward Lord Tweedmouth. (<i>In another Place as Lord Privy Seal.</i>)
Francis Lord Ettrick. (<i>Lord Napier.</i>)	Frederick Beauchamp Paget Lord Alcester.
James Charles Herbert Welbore Ellis Lord Somerton. (<i>Earl of Nor- manton.</i>)	Hallam Lord Tennyson.
Henry Austin Lord Aberdare.	James Lord Strathspey. (<i>Earl of Sea- field.</i>)
James Lord Moncreiff.	John George Lord Monk Bretton.
John Duke Lord Coleridge.	Walter Henry Lord Northbourne.
William Lord Emly.	Arthur Saunders William Charles Fox- Lord Sudley. (<i>Earl of Arran.</i>)
Chichester Samuel Lord Carlingford. (<i>Lord Clermont.</i>)	John Robert William Lord de Vesci. (<i>Viscount de Vesci.</i>)
Thomas Francis Lord Cottesloe.	Marmaduke Francis Lord Herries.
Herbert Perrott Murray Lord Hampton.	Hardinge Stanley Lord Halsbury.
Charles Alexander Lord Douglas. (<i>Earl of Home.</i>)	Mervyn Edward Lord Powerscourt. (<i>In another Place as Viscount Powers- court.</i>)
Arthur George Maule Lord Ramsay. (<i>Earl of Dalhousie.</i>)	Anthony Henley Lord Northington. (<i>Lord Henley.</i>)
John Henry Lord Fermanagh. (<i>Earl Erne.</i>)	Nathaniel Mayer Lord Rothschild.
William Richard Lord Harlech.	Edward Charles Lord Revelstoke.
Henry Gerard Lord Alington.	Robert Lord Monkswell.
Wilbraham Frederic Lord Tollemache.	Arthur Lord Hobhouse.
William Cansfield Lord Gerard.	Ralph Robert Wheeler Lord Lingen.
Lionel Sackville Lord Sackville.	Edward Lord Ashbourne.
Colin Lord Blackburn.	Rowland Lord Saint Oswald.
Charles Bowyer Lord Norton.	Robert James Lord Wantage.
Percy Lord Shute. (<i>Viscount Barring- ton.</i>)	William Baliol Lord Esher.
William Lord Watson. (<i>A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.</i>)	Robert Wilfrid Lord Deramore.
Lawrence Hesketh Lord Haldon.	Henry John Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.
Ivor Bertie Lord Wimborne.	Sidney Herbert Lord Elphinstone.
Arthur Edward Lord Ardilaun.	Charles John Lord Colville of Culross.
Charles Wallace Alexander Napier Lord Lamington.	Farrer Lord Herschell. (<i>In another Place as Lord High Chancellor.</i>)
Charles Frederick Lord Donington.	Charles Henry Lord Hillingdon.
Arthur Edwin Lord Trevor.	Samuel Charles Lord Hindlip.
Montagu William Lord Rowton.	Edmund Lord Grimthorpe.
Edward Lord Brabourne.	

ROLL OF THE LORDS.

Richard de Aquila Lord Stalbridge.	George Lord Mount Stephen.
William Lord Kensington.	Samuel Lord Masham.
Michael Arthur Lord Burton.	Frederick Sleigh Lord Roberts of Kandahar.
John Glencairn Carter Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.	Arthur William Acland Lord Hood of Avalon.
Thomas Lord Brassey.	William Lord Kelvin.
Henry Lord Thring.	Henry John Lord Rookwood.
Frederick Arthur Lord Stanley of Preston. (<i>In another Place as Earl of Derby.</i>)	Evelyn Lord Cromer.
Edward Lord Macnaghten. (<i>A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.</i>)	Alexander Burns Lord Shand.
Robert Lord Connemara.	George Lord Ashcombe.
Claude Lord Bowes. (<i>Earl of Strath- more and Kinghorn.</i>)	Rainald Lord Knightley.
George Edmund Milnes Lord Monckton. (<i>Viscount Galway.</i>)	Alexander Campbell Lord Blythswood.
John Lord Saint Levan.	Thomas Lord Crawshaw.
James Douglas Lord Magheramorne.	William Amhurst Lord Amherst of Hackney.
William George Lord Armstrong.	William John Lord Newton.
George Lord Basing.	John Lord Dunleath.
William Henry Lord de Ramsey.	John Allan Lord Llangattock.
William Meriton Lord Cheylesmore.	Lyon Lord Playfair.
Egerton Lord Addington.	Cyril Lord Battersea.
Henry Thurstan Lord Knutsford.	Henry Hussey Lord Swansea.
John Lord Savile.	Thomas Henry Lord Farrer.
Michael Lord Morris. (<i>A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.</i>)	John Campbell Lord Overtoun.
William Ventris Lord Field.	Cecil George Savile Lord Hawkesbury.
Edward Cecil Lord Iveagh.	Francis Archibald Lord Kelhead. (<i>Vis- count Drumlanrig.</i>)
James Lord Hannen.	Arthur Lord Stanmore.
	Charles Syng Christopher Lord Bowen. (<i>A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.</i>)

There is a vacancy in the representation of the Peers of Scotland caused by the death of the Viscount Strathallan.

LIST OF THE COMMONS.

THE NAMES OF MEMBERS

RETURNED TO SERVE IN THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, SUMMONED TO MEET AT WESTMINSTER THE FOURTH DAY OF AUGUST, ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY TWO, AS BY THE SEVERAL RETURNS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CROWN IN CHANCERY APPEARS. CORRECTED TO THE MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF MARCH, ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY FOUR.

BEDFORD.

NORTHERN, or BIGGLESWADE DIVISION,
George William Erskine Russell.

SOUTHERN, or LUTON DIVISION,
Howard Whitbread.

BEDFORD BOROUGH.
Samuel Whitbread.

BERKS.

NORTHERN, or ABINGDON DIVISION,
Philip Wroughton.

SOUTHERN, or NEWBURY DIVISION,
William George Mount.

EASTERN, or WOKINGHAM DIVISION,
Sir George Russell, bt.

READING BOROUGH.
George William Palmer.

WINDSOR (NEW) BOROUGH.
Francis Tress Barry.

BUCKS.

NORTHERN, or BUCKINGHAM DIVISION
Herbert Samuel Leon.

MID, or AYLESBURY DIVISION,
Baron Ferdinand James de Rothschild.

SOUTHERN, or WYCOMBE DIVISION,
Viscount Curzon.

CAMBRIDGE.

NORTHERN, or WISBECH DIVISION,
Hon. Arthur George Brand.

WESTERN, or CHESTERTON DIVISION,
Hugh Edward Hoare.

EASTERN, or NEWMARKET DIVISION,
George Newnes.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

Richard Claverhouse Jebb,
Right Hon. Sir John Eldon Gorst.

CAMBRIDGE BOROUGH.
Robert Uniacke Penrose FitzGerald.

CHESTER.

WIRRAL DIVISION,
Lt.-Colonel Edward Thomas Davenant
Cotton-Jodrell.

EDDISBURY DIVISION,
Henry James Tollemache.

MACCLESFIELD DIVISION,
William Bromley-Davenport.

CREWE DIVISION,
Walter Stowe Bright McLaren.

NORTHWICH DIVISION,
John Tomlinson Brunner.

ALTRINCHAM DIVISION,
Coningsby Ralph Disraeli.

CHESTER—*cont.*

HYDE DIVISION,
Joseph Watson Sidebotham.

KNUTSFORD DIVISION,
Hon. Alan de Tatton Egerton.

BIRKENHEAD BOROUGH.
Viscount Bury.

CHESTER BOROUGH.
Robert Armstrong Yerburgh.

STOCKPORT BOROUGH.
Joseph Leigh,
George Whiteley.

CORNWALL.

WESTERN, or ST. IVES DIVISION,
Thomas Bedford Bolitho.

NORTH-WESTERN, or CAMBORNE DIVISION,
Charles Augustus Vansittart Conybeare.

TRURO DIVISION,
John Charles Williams.

MID, or ST. AUSTELL DIVISION,
William Alexander McArthur.

SOUTH-EASTERN, or BODMIN DIVISION.
Rt. Hon. Leonard Henry Courtney.

NORTH-EASTERN, or LAUNCESTON DIVISION.
Thomas Owen.

PENRYN AND FALMOUTH BOROUGH.
William George Cavendish Bentinck.

CUMBERLAND.

NORTHERN, or ESKDALE DIVISION,
Robert Andrew Allison.

MID, or PENRITH DIVISION,
James William Lowther.

COCKERMOUTH DIVISION,
Sir Wilfrid Lawson, bt.

WESTERN, or EGREMONT DIVISION,
David Ainsworth.

CARLISLE BOROUGH.
William Court Gully.

WHITEHAVEN BOROUGH.
Thomas Shepherd Little.

DERBY.

HIGH PEAK DIVISION,
William Sidebottom.

NORTH-EASTERN DIVISION,
Thomas Dolling Bolton.

CHESTERFIELD DIVISION,
Thomas Bayley.

WESTERN DIVISION,
Victor Christian William Cavendish.

MID DIVISION,
James Alfred Jacoby.

ILKESTON DIVISION,
Sir Balthazar Walter Foster.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,
Harrington Evans Broad.

DERBY BOROUGH.
Rt. Hon. Sir William George Granville
Venables Vernon Harcourt, kt.,
Sir Thomas Roe, kt.

DEVON.

EASTERN, or HONITON DIVISION,
Sir John Henry Kennaway, bt.

NORTH-EASTERN, or TIVERTON DIVISION,
Colonel Sir William Hood Walrond, bt.

NORTHERN, or SOUTH MOLTON DIVISION,
George Lambert.

NORTH-WESTERN, or BARNSTAPLE DIVISION,
Alfred Billson.

WESTERN, or TAVISTOCK DIVISION,
Hugh Courtenay Fownes Luttrell.

SOUTHERN, or TOTNES DIVISION,
Francis Bingham Mildmay.

TORQUAY DIVISION,
Richard Mallock.

MID, or ASHBURTON DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-Hayne.

DEVONPORT BOROUGH.
Hudson E. Kearley,
Edward J. C. Morton.

DEVON—*cont.*

EXETER BOROUGH.

Hon. Sir Henry Stafford Northcote, bt.,
C.B.

PLYMOUTH BOROUGH.

Sir Edward George Clarke, kt.

Sir William George Pearce, bt.

DORSET.

NORTHERN DIVISION,

John Kenelm Digby Wingfield-Digby.

EASTERN DIVISION,

Hon. Humphrey Napier Sturt.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,

William Ernest Brymer.

WESTERN DIVISION,

Henry Richard Farquharson.

DURHAM.

JARROW DIVISION,

Sir Charles Mark Palmer, bt.

HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING DIVISION,

Captain Henry Thomas Fenwick.

CHESTER-LE-STREET DIVISION,

Sir James Joicey, bt.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION,

Llewellyn Archer Atherley-Jones.

MID DIVISION,

John Wilson.

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION,

Joseph Richardson.

BISHOP AUCKLAND DIVISION,

James Mellor Paulton.

BARNARD CASTLE DIVISION,

Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease, bt.

DARLINGTON BOROUGH.

Sir Theodore Fry, bt.

DURHAM BOROUGH.

Matthew A. Fowler.

GATESHEAD BOROUGH.

William Allan.

HARTLEPOOLS (THE) BOROUGH.

Christopher Furness.

DURHAM—*cont.*

SOUTH SHIELDS BOROUGH.

James Cochran Stevenson.

STOCKTON BOROUGH.

Thomas Wrightson.

SUNDERLAND BOROUGH.

Samuel Storey,

Edward Temperley Gourley.

ESSEX.

SOUTH-WESTERN, or WALTHAMSTOW
DIVISION,

Edmund Widdrington Byrne.

SOUTHERN, or ROMFORD DIVISION,

James Theobald.

WESTERN, or EPPING DIVISION,

Lt.-Col. Amelius Richard Mark Lockwood.

NORTHERN, or SAFFRON WALDEN
DIVISION,

Herbert Colstoun Gardner.

NORTH-EASTERN, or HARWICH DIVISION,
James Round.

EASTERN, or MALDON DIVISION,

Cyril Joseph Settle Dodd.

MID, or CHELMSFORD DIVISION,

Thomas Usborne.

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION,

Major Frederic Carne Rasch.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH.

Captain Herbert S. Naylor Leyland.

WEST HAM BOROUGH.

North Division,

Thomas Newcomen Archibald Grove.

South Division,

James Keir-Hardie.

GLOUCESTER.

MID, or STROUD DIVISION,

David Brynmor Jones.

NORTHERN, or TEWKESBURY DIVISION,

Sir John Edward Dorington, bt.

EASTERN, or CIRENCESTER DIVISION,

Harry Lawson Webster Lawson.

GLOUCESTER—*cont.*

FOREST OF DEAN DIVISION,

Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, bt.

SOUTHERN, or THORNBURY DIVISION,

Charles Edward Hungerford Athole Colston.

BRISTOL BOROUGH.

West Division,

Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Edward Hicks-Beach, bt.

North Division.

Charles Townsend.

East Division,

Sir Joseph Dodge Weston, kt.

South Division,

Colonel Sir Edward Stock Hill, K.C.B.

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH.

James Tynte Agg-Gardner.

GLOUCESTER BOROUGH.

Thomas Robinson.

HANTS.

NORTHERN, or BASINGSTOKE DIVISION.

Arthur Frederick Jeffreys.

WESTERN, or ANDOVER DIVISION,

William Wither Bramston Beach.

EASTERN, or PETERSFIELD DIVISION,

William Wickham.

SOUTHERN, or FAREHAM DIVISION,

General Sir Frederick Wellington John FitzWygram, bt.

NEW FOREST DIVISION,

Hon. John Walter Edward Douglas Scott-Montagu.

CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH.

Abel Henry Smith.

PORTSMOUTH BOROUGH.

John Baker,

Walter Owen Clough.

SOUTHAMPTON BOROUGH.

Tankerville Chamberlayne,

Sir Francis Henry Evans, K.C.M.G.

WINCHESTER BOROUGH.

William Henry Myers.

HEREFORD.

NORTHERN, or LEOMINSTER DIVISION,
James Rankin.

SOUTHERN, or ROSS DIVISION,

Michael Biddulph.

HEREFORD BOROUGH.

Charles Wallwyn Radcliffe Cooke.

HERTFORD.

NORTHERN, or HITCHIN DIVISION,

George Bickersteth Hudson.

EASTERN, or HERTFORD DIVISION,

Abel Smith.

MID, or ST. ALBAN'S DIVISION,

Vicary Gibbs.

WESTERN, or WATFORD DIVISION,

Thomas Frederick Halsey.

HUNTINGDON.

SOUTHERN, or HUNTINGDON DIVISION,

Arthur Hugh Smith-Barry.

NORTHERN, or RAMSEY DIVISION,

Hon. Ailwyn Edward Fellowes.

ISLE OF WIGHT.

Sir Richard Everard Webster, kt.

KENT.

WESTERN, or SEVENOAKS DIVISION,

Henry William Forster.

NORTH-WESTERN, or DARTFORD
DIVISION,

Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart Dyke, bt.

SOUTH-WESTERN, or TUNBRIDGE
DIVISION,

Arthur S. T. Griffith-Boscawen.

MID, or MEDWAY DIVISION,

Lt.-Col. Charles Edward Warde.

NORTH-EASTERN, or FAVERSHAM
DIVISION,

Hon. Herbert Thomas Knatchbull-Hugessen.

SOUTHERN, or ASHFORD DIVISION,

Laurence Hardy.

KENT—cont.

EASTERN, or ST. AUGUSTINE'S DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Aretas Akers-Douglas.

ISLE OF THANET DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. James Lowther.

CANTERBURY BOROUGH.
John Henniker Heaton.

CHATHAM BOROUGH.
Colonel Lewis Vivian Loyd.

DEPTFORD BOROUGH.
Charles John Darling.

DOVER BOROUGH.
George Wyndham.

GRAVESEND BOROUGH.
James Dampier Palmer.

GREENWICH BOROUGH.
Thomas William Boord.

HYPHE BOROUGH.
Sir Edward William Watkin, bt.

LEWISHAM BOROUGH.
John Penn.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH.
Francis Stanley Wykeham Cornwallis.

ROCHESTER BOROUGH.
Viscount Cranborne.

WOOLWICH BOROUGH.
Colonel Edwin Hughes.

LANCASTER.**North Lancashire.**

NORTH LONSDALE DIVISION,
William Smith.

LANCASTER DIVISION,
James Williamson.

BLACKPOOL DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew White Ridley, bt.

CHORLEY DIVISION,
Lieut.-General Randle Joseph Feilden,
C.M.G.

North-East Lancashire.

DARWEN DIVISION,
Charles Philip Huntington.

LANCASTER—cont.

CLITHEROE DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, bt.

ACCRINGTON DIVISION,
Joseph Francis Leese.

ROSSENDALE DIVISION,
John Henry Maden.

South-East Lancashire
WESTHOUGHTON DIVISION,
Lord Edward George Villiers Stanley.

HEYWOOD DIVISION,
Thomas Snape.

MIDDLETON DIVISION,
Charles Henry Hopwood.

RADCLIFFE-CUM-FARNWORTH DIVISION,
Robert Leake.

ECCLES DIVISION,
Henry John Roby.

STRETFORD DIVISION,
John William Maclure.

GORTON DIVISION,
William Mather.

PRESTWICH DIVISION,
Robert Gray Cornish Mowbray.

South-West Lancashire.
SOUTHPORT DIVISION,
Hon. George Nathaniel Curzon.

ORMSKIRK DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Arthur Bower Forwood.

BOOTLE DIVISION,
Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Myles Sandys.

WIDNES DIVISION,
John Saunders Gilliat.

NEWTON DIVISION,
Hon. Thomas Wodehouse Legh.

INCE DIVISION,
Samuel Woods.

LEIGH DIVISION,
Caleb Wright.
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE BOROUGH.
John Edmund Wentworth Addison.

LANCASTER—*cont.*

BARROW-IN-FURNESS BOROUGH.

Charles William Cayzer.

BLACKBURN BOROUGH.

William Henry Hornby,

William Coddington.

BOLTON BOROUGH.

Herbert Shepherd-Cross,

Colonel Hon. Francis Charles Bridge-
man.

BURNLEY BOROUGH.

Hon. Philip James Stanhope.

BURY BOROUGH.

Rt. Hon. Sir Henry James, kt.

LIVERPOOL BOROUGH.

*Kirkdale Division,*Sir George Smyth Baden-Powell,
K.C.M.G.*Walton Division,*

James Henry Stock.

Everton Division,

John Archibald Willox.

West Derby Division,

Walter Hume Long.

Scotland Division,

Thomas Power O'Connor.

Exchange Division,

Ralph Neville.

Abercromby Division,

William Frederick Lawrence.

East Toxteth Division,

Rt. Hon. Baron Henry de Worms.

West Toxteth Division,

Robert Paterson Houston.

MANCHESTER BOROUGH.

North-West Division,

Sir William Henry Houldsworth, bt.

North Division,

Charles Ernest Schwann.

*North-East Division,*Rt. Hon. Sir James Fergusson, bt.,
G.C.S.I.LANCASTER—*cont.**East Division,*

Rt. Hon. Arthur James Balfour.

South Division,

Sir Henry Enfield Roscoe, kt.

South-West Division,

Jacob Bright.

OLDHAM BOROUGH.

Joshua Milne Cheetham.

Rt. Hon. Sir John Tomlinson Hibbert,
K.C.B.

PRESTON BOROUGH.

Robert William Hanbury,

William Edward Murray Tomlinson.

ROCHDALE BOROUGH.

Thomas Bayley Potter.

SALFORD BOROUGH.

North Division,

William Henry Holland.

West Division,

Lees Knowles.

South Division,

Sir Henry Hoyle Howorth, K.C.I.E.

ST. HELENS BOROUGH.

Henry Seton-Karr.

STALYBRIDGE BOROUGH.

Tom Harrop Sidebottom.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH.

Robert Pierpoint.

WIGAN BOROUGH.

Sir Francis Sharp Powell, bt.

LEICESTER.

EASTERN, or MELTON DIVISION,

Marquess of Granby.

MID, or LOUGHBOROUGH DIVISION,

Jabez Edward Johnson-Ferguson.

WESTERN, or BOSWORTH DIVISION,

Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren.

SOUTHERN, or HARBOROUGH DIVISION,

John William Logan.

LEICESTER BOROUGH.

James Allanson Picton,

Sir James Whitehead, bt.

LINCOLN.

WEST LINDSEY, or GAINSBORO'
DIVISION,

Joseph Bennett.

NORTH LINDSEY, or BRIGG DIVISION,
Samuel Danks Waddy.

EAST LINDSEY, or LOUTH DIVISION,
Robert William Perks.

SOUTH LINDSEY, or HORNCASTLE
DIVISION,
Lord Willoughby d'Eresby.

NORTH KESTEVEN, or SLEAFORD
DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Henry Chaplin.

SOUTH KESTEVEN, or STAMFORD
DIVISION,
Henry John Cokayne Cust.

HOLLAND, or SPALDING DIVISION,
Halley Stewart.

BOSTON BOROUGH.
Sir William James Ingram, bt.

GRANTHAM BOROUGH.
Henry Yarde Buller Lopes.

GREAT GRIMSBY BOROUGH.
Rt. Hon. Edward Heneage.

LINCOLN BOROUGH.
William Crosfield.

MIDDLESEX.

ENFIELD DIVISION,
Captain Henry Ferryman Bowles.

TOTTENHAM DIVISION,
Joseph Howard.

HORNSEY DIVISION,
Henry Charles Stephens.

HARROW DIVISION,
William Ambrose.

EALING DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Lord George Francis Hamilton.

BRENTFORD DIVISION,
James Bigwood.

UXBRIDGE DIVISION,
Sir Frederick Dixon Dixon-Hartland, bt.

MIDDLESEX—cont.

BETHNAL GREEN BOROUGH.

North-East Division,
George Howell.

South-West Division,
Edward Hare Pickersgill.

CHELSEA BOROUGH.
Charles Algernon Whitmore.

FINSBURY BOROUGH.
Holborn Division,
Sir Charles Hall, K.C.M.G.

Central Division,
Dadabhai Naoroji.

East Division,
James Rowlands.

FULHAM BOROUGH.
William Hayes Fisher.

HACKNEY BOROUGH.
North Division,
William Robert Bousfield.
Central Division,
Sir Andrew Richard Seoble, K.C.S.I.

South Division,
Sir Charles Russell, kt.

HAMMERSMITH BOROUGH.
Major-General Walter Tuckfield Golds-
worthy.

HAMPSTEAD BOROUGH.
Edward Brodie Hoare.

ISLINGTON BOROUGH.
North Division,
George Christopher Trout Bartley.

West Division,
Thomas Lough.

East Division,
Benjamin Louis Cohen.

South Division,
Sir Albert Kaye Rollit, kt.

KENSINGTON BOROUGH.
North Division,
Frederick Charlwood Frye.

MIDDLESEX—Kensington Boro'—*cont.**South Division,*

Sir Algernon Borthwick, bt.

LONDON UNIVERSITY.

Rt. Hon. Sir John Lubbock, bt.

MARYLEBONE BOROUGH.

East Division,

Edmund Boulnois.

West Division,

Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, bt.

PADDINGTON BOROUGH.

North Division,

John Aird.

*South Division,*Rt. Hon. Lord Randolph Henry Spencer
Churchill.

ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE.

Rt. Hon. George Joachim Goschen.

ST. PANCRAS BOROUGH.

North Division,

Thomas Henry Bolton.

East Division,

Robert Grant Webster.

West Division,

Henry Robert Graham.

South Division,

Sir Julian Goldsmid, bt.

SHOREDITCH BOROUGH.

Hoxton Division,

James Stuart.

Haggerston Division,

William Randal Cremer.

STRAND BOROUGH.

Hon. William Frederick Danvers Smith.

TOWER HAMLETS BOROUGH.

Whitechapel Division,

Samuel Montagu.

St. George's Division,

John Williams Benn.

Lincolns Division,

John Stewart Wallace.

Mile End Division,

Spencer Charrington.

MIDDLESEX—Tower Hamlets Boro'—*cont.**Stepney Division,*

Frederick Wootton Isaacson.

Bow and Bromley Division,

John Archibald Murray Macdonald.

Poplar Division,

Sydney Charles Buxton.

WESTMINSTER BOROUGH.

William Lehmann Ashmead-Bartlett
Burdett-Coutts.

LONDON CITY.

Sir Reginald Hanson, bt.,

Alban George Henry Gibbs.

MONMOUTH.

NORTHERN DIVISION,

Thomas Phillips Price.

WESTERN DIVISION,

Cornelius Marshall Warmington.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,

Hon. Frederick Courtenay Morgan.

MONMOUTH BOROUGH.

Albert Spicer.

NORFOLK.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION,

Joseph Arch.

SOUTH-WESTERN DIVISION,

Thomas Leigh Hare.

NORTHERN DIVISION,

Herbert Hardy Cozens-Hardy.

EASTERN DIVISION,

Robert John Price.

MID DIVISION,

Clement Higgins.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,

Francis Taylor.

GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH.

James Marshall Moorsom.

KING'S LYNN BOROUGH.

Thomas Gibson Bowles.

NORWICH BOROUGH.

Samuel Hoare,

Jeremiah James Colman.

NORTHAMPTON.

NORTHERN DIVISION,
Rt. Hon. Lord Burghley.

EASTERN DIVISION,
Francis Allston Channing.

MID DIVISION,
Hon. Charles Robert Spencer.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,
David Charles Guthrie.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH.

Henry Labouchere,

Moses Philip Manfield.

PETERBOROUGH BOROUGH.
Alphéus Cleophas Morton.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

WANSBECK DIVISION,
Charles Fenwick.

TYNESIDE DIVISION,
Joseph Albert Pease.

HEXHAM DIVISION,
Miles Mac Innes.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED DIVISION,
Sir Edward Grey, bt.

MORPETH BOROUGH.
Thomas Burt.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE BOROUGH.

Charles Frederick Hamond,

Rt. Hon. John Morley.

TYNEMOUTH BOROUGH.
Richard Sim Donkin.

NOTTINGHAM.

BASSETLAW DIVISION,
Sir Frederick George Milner, bt.

NEWARK DIVISION,
Viscount Newark.

RUSHCLIFFE DIVISION,
John Edward Ellis.

MANSFIELD DIVISION,
John Carvell Williams.

NOTTINGHAM BOROUGH.

West Division,
Colonel Charles Seely.

East Division,
Rt. Hon. Arnold Morley.

South Division,
Henry Smith Wright.

OXFORD.

NORTHERN, or BANBURY DIVISION,
Sir Bernhard Samuelson, bt.

MID, or WOODSTOCK DIVISION,
Godfrey Rathbone Benson.

SOUTHERN, or HENLEY DIVISION,
Hon. Francis Parker.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.
Rt. Hon. Sir John Robert Mowbray,
bt., D.C.L.

John Gilbert Talbot, D.C.L.

OXFORD BOROUGH.
General Sir George Tomkyns Chesney,
K.C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E., R.E.

RUTLAND.
George Henry Finch.

SALOP.

WESTERN, or OSWESTRY DIVISION,
Stanley Leighton.

NORTHERN, or NEWPORT DIVISION,
Col. William Slaney Kenyon-Slaney.

MID, or WELLINGTON DIVISION,
Alexander Hargreaves Brown.

SOUTHERN, or LUDLOW DIVISION,
Robert Jasper More.

SHREWSBURY BOROUGH.
Henry David Greene.

SOMERSET.

NORTHERN DIVISION,
Thomas Courtenay Theydon Warner.

WELLS DIVISION,
Colonel Sir Richard Horner Paget, bt.

FROME DIVISION,
John Emmott Barlow.

EASTERN DIVISION,
Henry Hobhouse.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,
Edward Strachey.

BRIDGEWATER DIVISION,
Edward James Stanley.

WESTERN, or WELLINGTON DIVISION,
Capt. Sir A. F. Acland-Hood, bt.

SOMERSET—*cont.*

BATH BOROUGH.

Colonel Charles Wyndham Murray,
Edmond Robert Wodehouse.

TAUNTON BOROUGH.

Hon. Alfred Percy Allsopp.

STAFFORD.

LEEK DIVISION,

Charles Bill.

BURTON DIVISION,

Sydney Evershed.

WESTERN DIVISION,

Hamar Alfred Bass.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION,

James Heath.

LICHFIELD DIVISION,

Major Leonard Darwin.

KINGSWINFORD DIVISION,

Rt. Hon. Alexander Staveley Hill.

HANDSWORTH DIVISION,

Sir Henry Meysey Meysey-Thompson,
bt.

HANLEY BOROUGH.

William Woodall.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH.

William Allen.

STAFFORD BOROUGH.

Charles Edward Shaw.

STOKE-UPON-TRENT BOROUGH.

Hon. George Granville Leveson-Gower.

WALSALL BOROUGH.

Sir Arthur Divett Hayter, bt.

WEDNESBURY BOROUGH.

Wilson Lloyd.

WEST BROMWICH BOROUGH.

Ernest Spencer.

WOLVERHAMPTON BOROUGH.

West Division,

Sir Alfred Hickman, kt.

East Division,

Rt. Hon. Henry Hartley Fowler.

South Division,

Rt. Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers.

SUFFOLK.

NORTHERN, or LOWESTOFT DIVISION,
Harry Seymour Foster.

NORTH-EASTERN, or EYE DIVISION,
Francis Seymour Stevenson.

NORTH-WESTERN, or STOWMARKET
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Sydney James Stern.

SOUTH, or SUDBURY DIVISION,
William Cuthbert Quilter.

SOUTH-EASTERN, or WOODBRIDGE
DIVISION,
Robert Lacey Everett.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS BOROUGH.
Viscount Chelsea.

IPSWICH BOROUGH.

Sir Charles Dalrymple, bt.,
Lord Elcho.

SURREY.

NORTH-WESTERN, or CHERTSEY
DIVISION,
Charles Harvey Combe.

SOUTH-WESTERN, or GUILDFORD
DIVISION,
Hon. William St. John Fremantle
Brodrick.

SOUTH-EASTERN, or REIGATE DIVISION,
Hon. Henry Cubitt.

MID, or EPSOM DIVISION,
Thomas Townsend Bucknill.

KINGSTON DIVISION,
Sir Richard Temple, bt., G.C.S.I.

NORTH-EASTERN, or WIMBLEDON
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Henry Cosmo Orme Bonsor.

BATTERSEA AND CLAPHAM BOROUGH.
Battersea Division,
John Burns.

Clapham Division,
Percy Melville Thornton.

CAMBERWELL BOROUGH.
North Division,
Edward Hodson Bayley.

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Frederick George Banbury.

Dulwich Division,

Sir John Blundell Maple, kt.

CROYDON BOROUGH.

Hon. Sidney Herbert.

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North Division,

Francis Moses Coldwells.

Kennington Division,

Mark Hanbury Beaufoy.

Brixton Division,

Marquess of Carmarthen.

Norwood Division,

Charles Ernest Tritton.

NEWINGTON BOROUGH.

West Division,

Captain Cecil William Norton.

Walworth Division,

William Saunders.

SOUTHWARK BOROUGH.

West Division,

Richard Knight Causton.

Rotherhithe Division,

John Cumming Macdonald.

Bermondsey Division,

Reuben Vincent Barrow.

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH.

Henry Kimber.

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John Heywood Johnstone.

SOUTH-WESTERN, or CHICHESTER

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Rt. Hon. Lord Walter Charles Gordon
Lennox.

NORTHERN, or EAST GRINSTEAD DIVISION,

Hon. Alfred Erskine Gathorne-Hardy.

SUSSEX—*cont.*

MID, or LEWES DIVISION, ...

Sir Henry Fletcher, bt.

SOUTHERN, or EASTBOURNE DIVISION,

Admiral Edward Field.

EASTERN, or RYE DIVISION,

Arthur Montagu Brookfield.

BRIGHTON BOROUGH.

Gerald Walter Erskine Loder,

Bruce Canning Vernon-Wentworth.

HASTINGS BOROUGH.

Wilson Noble.

WARWICK.

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Philip Albert Muntz.

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Francis Alexander Newdigate.

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Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford.

SOUTH-EASTERN, or RUGBY DIVISION,

Henry Peyton Cobb.

ASTON MANOR BOROUGH.

Captain George William Grice-Hutchinson.

BIRMINGHAM BOROUGH.

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George Dixon.

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Central Division,

John Albert Bright.

North Division,

William Kenrick.

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Bordesley Division,

Rt. Hon. Jesse Collings.

South Division,

Joseph Powell-Williams.

WARWICK—cont.**COVENTRY BOROUGH.**

William Henry Walter Ballantine.

WARWICK & LEAMINGTON BOROUGH.

Rt. Hon. Arthur Wellesley Peel.

WESTMORELAND.**NORTHERN, or APPLEBY DIVISION,**

Sir Joseph Savory, bt.

SOUTHERN, or KENDAL DIVISION,

Captain Josceline FitzRoy Bagot.

WILTS.**NORTHERN, or CRICKLADE DIVISION,**

John Husband.

**NORTH-WESTERN, or CHIPPENHAM
DIVISION,**

Sir John Poynder Dickson-Poynder, bt.

WESTERN, or WESTBURY DIVISION,

George Pargiter Fuller.

EASTERN, or DEVIZES DIVISION,

Charles Edward Henry Hobhouse.

SOUTHERN, or WILTON DIVISION,

Viscount Folkestone.

SALISBURY BOROUGH.

Edward Henry Hulse.

WORCESTER.**WESTERN, or BEWDLEY DIVISION,**

Alfred Baldwin.

SOUTHERN, or EVESHAM DIVISION,

Sir Edmund Anthony Harley Lechmere, bt.

MID, or DROITWICH DIVISION,

Richard Biddulph Martin.

NORTHERN, or OLDBURY DIVISION,

Sir Benjamin Hingley, bt.

EASTERN DIVISION,

Joseph Austen Chamberlain.

DUDLEY BOROUGH.

Brooke Robinson.

KIDDERMINSTER BOROUGH.

Augustus Frederick Godson.

WORCESTER BOROUGH.

Hon. George Higginson Allsopp.

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John Grant Lawson.

RICHMOND DIVISION,

Sir George William Elliot, bt.

CLEVELAND DIVISION,

Henry Fell Pease.

WHITBY DIVISION,

Ernest William Beckett.

East Riding.**HOLDERNESSE DIVISION,**

Commander George Richard Bethell.

BUCKROSE DIVISION,

Angus Holden.

HOWDENSHERE DIVISION,

William Henry Wilson-Todd.

West Riding, Northern Part.**SKIPTON DIVISION,**

Charles Savile Roundell.

KEIGHLEY DIVISION,

Sir Isaac Holden, bt.

SHIPLEY DIVISION,

William Pollard Byles.

SOWERBY DIVISION,

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ELLAND DIVISION,

Thomas Wayman.

West Riding, Southern Part.**MORLEY DIVISION,**

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NORMANTON DIVISION,

Benjamin Pickard.

COLNE VALLEY DIVISION,

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HALLAMSHIRE DIVISION,

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Gerald William Balfour.

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Lawrence Gane.

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South Division,

John Lawson Walton.

MIDDLESBROUGH BOROUGH.

Joseph Havelock Wilson.

PONTEFRAC T BOROUGH.

Thomas Willans Nussey.

SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH.

Sir George Reresby Sitwell, bt.

SHEFFIELD BOROUGH.

Attercliffe Division,

Hon. Bernard John Seymour Coleridge.

Brightside Division,

Rt. Hon. Anthony John Mundella.

*Central Division,*Col. Charles Edward Howard Vincent,
C.B.*Hallam Division,*

Charles Beilby Stuart-Wortley.

Ecclesall Division,

Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, kt.

WAKEFIELD BOROUGH.

Col. Albany Hawkes Charlesworth.

YORK BOROUGH.

John George Butcher,

Frank Lockwood.

WALES.

—

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William Bowen Rowlands.

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Hon. George Thomas Kenyon.

FLINT.

Samuel Smith.

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John Herbert Lewis.

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RHONDDA DIVISION,

William Abraham.

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David Randell.

MID DIVISION,

Samuel Thomas Evans.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,

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CARDIFF BOROUGH.

Sir Edward James Reed, K.C.B.

MERTHYR TYDVIL BOROUGH.

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William Pritchard Morgan.

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Robert John Dickson Burnie.

Swansea, District,

William Williams.

MERIONETH.

Thomas Edward Ellis.

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Stuart Rendel.

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Sir Pryce Pryce-Jones, kt.

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William Rees Davies.

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RADNOR.

Frank Edwards.

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WESTERN DIVISION,

Dr. Robert Farquharson.

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William Alexander Hunter.

South Division,

Rt. Hon. James Bryce.

ARGYLL.

Sir Donald Horne Macfarlane, kt.

AYR.

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Cochrane.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,

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AYR DISTRICT OF BURGHS.

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KILMARNOCK DISTRICT OF BURGHS.

Stephen Williamson.

BANFF.

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CAITHNESS.

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FORFAR.

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Sir John Leng, kt.

Edmund Robertson.

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INVERNESS.

Dr. Donald Macgregor.

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KINCARDINE.

John William Crombie.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

Sir Mark John Stewart, bt.

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John Wilson.

PARTICK DIVISION,

James Parker Smith.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION,

Graeme Alexander Lockhart Whitelaw.

NORTH-EASTERN DIVISION,

Donald Crawford.

MID DIVISION,

John Wynford Philipps.

SOUTHERN DIVISION,

James Henry Cecil Hozier.

LANARK—*cont.*

GLASGOW BOROUGH.

Bridgeton Division,

Rt. Hon. Sir George Otto Trevelyan, bt.

Camlachie Division,

Alexander Cross.

St. Rollox Division,

Sir James Morse Carmichael, bt.

Central Division,

John George Alexander Baird.

College Division,

Sir Charles Cameron, kt.

Tradeston Division,

Archibald Cameron Corbett.

Blackfriars and Hutchesontown Division,

Andrew Dryburgh Provand.

GLASGOW AND ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITIES.

James Alexander Campbell.

LINLITHGOW.

Captain Thomas Hope.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND.

Sir Leonard Lyell, bt.

PEEBLES AND SELKIRK.

Walter Thorburn.

PERTH.

EASTERN DIVISION,

Sir John George Smyth Kinloch, bt.

WESTERN DIVISION,

Sir Donald Currie, K.C.M.G.

PERTH BURGH.

William Whitelaw.

RENFREW.

EASTERN DIVISION,

Michael Hugh Shaw-Stewart.

WESTERN DIVISION,

Charles Bine Renshaw.

GREENOCK BURGH.

Sir Thomas Sutherland, K.C.M.G.

PAISLEY BURGH.

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HAWICK DISTRICT OF BURGHS.

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STIRLING.

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WIGTON.

Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell, bt.

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MID ANTRIM DIVISION,

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SOUTH ANTRIM DIVISION,

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North Belfast Division,

Sir Edward James Harland, bt.

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Gustav Wilhelm Wolff.

South Belfast Division,

William Johnston.

West Belfast Division,

Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster.

ARMAGH.

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CAVAN.

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CLARE.

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CORK.

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James Christopher Flynn.

NORTH-EAST CORK DIVISION,
William Abraham.

MID CORK DIVISION,
Dr. Charles Kearns Deane Tanner.

EAST CORK DIVISION,
Captain Anthony John Charles Donelan.

WEST CORK DIVISION,
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DOWN.

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EAST DOWN DIVISION,
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DUBLIN.

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Hon. Horace Curzon Plunkett.

DUBLIN CITY.

College Green Division,
Dr. Joseph Edward Kenny.

Harbour Division,
Timothy Charles Harrington.

St. Stephen's Green Division,
William Kenny.

St. Patrick's Division,
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DUBLIN UNIVERSITY.
Rt. Hon. David Robert Plunket.
Edward Carson.

FERMANAGH.

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GALWAY.

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Colonel John Philip Nolan.

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John Roche.

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David Sheehy.

GALWAY TOWN.
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KERRY.

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Thomas Sexton.

WEST KERRY DIVISION,
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Patrick Alexander Chance.

KILKENNY CITY.
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Jasper Tully.

LIMERICK.

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John Finucane.

LIMERICK CITY.

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MAYO.

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—o—

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE—Exemption from the Standing Order—

Ordered, “That the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Address in Answer to Her Majesty’s Speech have precedence this day of the Notices of Motion,”—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Introduction of Bills—

Moved, “That all Members who desire to ballot for Bills, other than Government Bills, do hand in their names to the Clerk before the conclusion of Wednesday Sitting, and that a copy of the title of the Bill be handed in at the latest during the Sitting of the House on Thursday ; that the Ballot be taken at noon on Thursday, in Committee Room E,”—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*) ... 159

After short Debate, Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,—

“That with regard to Notices already handed in, the names only be published for the purpose of determining the precedence, and the title of the Bill be handed in afresh before the conclusion of Thursday Sitting,”—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour*) ... 162

Question, “That those words be there added,” put, and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, proposed, and, after short Debate, agreed to ... 163

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Address in Answer to Her Majesty’s Most Gracious Speech—Adjourned Debate [Second Night]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [12th March] :—
Question again proposed :—Debate resumed ... 164

After Debate, Amendment proposed, at the end of the Address, to add the words—

“And we humbly pray Your Majesty that the power now enjoyed by persons not elected to Parliament by the Possessors of the Parliamentary franchise to prevent Bills being submitted to Your Majesty for your Royal approval shall cease, and we respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary, your Majesty will, with and by the advice of your responsible Ministers, use the power vested in Your Majesty to secure the passing of this much-needed reform,”—(*Mr. Labouchere*) ... 205

Question proposed, “That those words be there added.”

After Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 147 ; Noes 145.

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Main Question, as amended, again proposed :—

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,—

“And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that this House has learnt with regret the determination of Your Majesty’s advisers, contrary to the wishes of the people of India, to restrain the Government of that country from taking the measures proposed by them for meeting the deficit in their revenues ; and that, in the opinion of this House, such a disregard of the feelings and interests of the people of India is at variance with the principles which should regulate our conduct towards them,”—(*Sir G. Chesney.*)

After Debate, Question, “That those words be there added,” put, and negatived 221

Main Question, as amended, again proposed :—

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,—

“And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that the time has come when the cases of all prisoners convicted under the Treason Felony Act who are and have been for many years undergoing punishment for offences arising out of insurrectionary movements connected with Ireland, may be advantageously reconsidered,”—(*Dr. Kenny.*)

After Debate, Question put, “That those words be there added :”—The House divided :—Ayes 96 ; Noes 286.—(Division List, No. 3) ... 241

Main Question, as amended, again proposed :—

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,—

“Humbly to represent to Your Majesty that the administration of the law in Ireland in the course of the last few months, by the encouragement offered to the eviction of tenants and the destruction and burning of their houses by the prosecution of representatives of the people and others for efforts to secure shelter for the evicted people, by the continuance of the practice of jury-packing, and by the suppression of public meetings, has caused grave disappointment in Ireland, and tends directly to produce that contempt for and hostility to the law and its administration which accompanied in so marked a degree the administration of Irish affairs by Your Majesty’s late Government,”—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Question proposed, “That those words be there added.”

After Debate, *Moved*, “That the Debate be now adjourned,”—(*Mr. J. Chamberlain.*)—After further short Debate, Question put, and agreed to :—Debate adjourned until To-morrow 254

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Local Government Provisional Orders Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 1.]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 2.]

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of Working Classes) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 3.]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—*Ordered*, That the Committee of Public Accounts do consist of Fifteen Members :—Mr. Bartley, Mr. Buchanan, Sir J. Gorst, Mr. Hanbury, Sir A. Hayter, Sir J. T. Hibbert, Mr. Jackson, Mr. A. C. Morton, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. A. O’Connor, Mr. P. Stanhope, Sir R. Temple, Mr. A. Williams, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Wodehouse. *Ordered*, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records. *Ordered*, That Five be the quorum,—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Crown Lands Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 4.] 255

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—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Priority for Financial Business until March 29 inclusive—

<i>Moved</i> , “That until and including Thursday the 29th of March Financial Business do have priority on every day for which it may be appointed, and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed, and be not interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House except Standing Order No. 5; but after such business is disposed of no other opposed business shall be taken. That Standing Order No. 11 be suspended, and the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to every day of the week,”—(<i>The Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>) ...	267
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—o—

Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech—Adjourned Debate [Third Night]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate :—Amendment [13th March] (*Mr. Clancy*)

After Debate, *Moved*, “That the Question be now put,”—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question put, “That the Question be now put :”—The House divided :—Ayes 227; Noes 145.—(Division List, No. 4) ... 294

Question put accordingly, “That those words be there added :”—The House divided :—Ayes 12; Noes 351.—(Division List, No. 5) ... 295

Moved, “That the Main Question, as amended, be now put,”—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)—Main Question, as amended, put accordingly, and *negatived*.

Moved, “That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as followeth :—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, humbly assure Your Majesty that the measures recommended to our consideration shall receive our most careful attention, and we beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament,”—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Address agreed to, *nemine contradicente*; to be presented by Privy Councillors.

M O T I O N S.

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THE WRIT FOR BERWICKSHIRE—Question, Mr. Hozier ; Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. T. E. Ellis*).

Motion agreed to.

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Quarter Sessions (Midsummer) Bill (No. 4)—

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Motion agreed to :—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House

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Moved to resolve, “That it is desirable that all Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament,”—(*The Lord Chancellor* 300

Motion agreed to :—Ordered, “That a Message be sent to the Commons to communicate this Resolution and to desire their concurrence.

THE ISLAND OF DOMINICA—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, “That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for the Report of Sir Robert Hamilton upon the administration of the Island of Dominica,”—(*The Earl of Stamford*.)

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Ordered, That To-morrow the introduction of Bills have precedence of the Orders of the Day,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

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STANDING ORDERS—

<i>Ordered</i> , That the Select Committee on Standing Orders do consist of Thirteen Members : Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Coddington, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Sir T. Esmonde, Mr. Halsey, Mr. James Lowther, Sir J. Lubbock, Sir J. Mowbray, Colonel Nolan, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Storey, and Mr. Whitbread were accordingly nominated Members of the Committee,—(Sir J. Mowbray)		432
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SELECTION—

<i>Ordered</i> , That the Committee of Selection do consist of Ten Members : Sir C. Cameron, Sir J. Dorington, Mr. Halsey, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Justin M’Carthy, Mr. A. Williams, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Wodehouse, and the Chairman of the Select Committee on Standing Orders were accordingly nominated Members of the Committee,—(Sir J. Mowbray.)		
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Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Amendment Bill —Ordered (Mr. Thomas B. Curran, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Condon, Mr. Crean, and Mr. O'Keeffe :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 13.]	
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Places of Worship, &c. (Rating) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Clarence Smith, Mr. Clough, Mr. Owen, and Mr. Perks</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 73.]	
Marriages (Attendance of Registrars) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Perks, Sir Isaac Holden, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Oldroyd, Mr. Snape, Mr. Spicer, and Mr. Waddy</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 74.]	
Working Men's Dwellings Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Wrightson, Sir John Gorst, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Alfred Hickman, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Bartley</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 75.]	
Housing of the Working Classes Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Stern, Mr. Channing, Mr. Logan, and Mr. H. L. W. Lawson</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 76.]	
Peers Disabilities Removal Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Curzon, and Viscount Wolmer</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 77.]	
Police (Metropolis) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Howell, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Pickersgill, and Mr. Naoroji</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 78.]	460
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Vehicles' Lights Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Webster, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Charles McLaren, Mr. Grice-Hutchinson, Mr. Graham, Mr. Bowen Rowlands, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, and Mr. Banbury</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 80.]	
Market Gardeners Compensation Bill —Ordered (<i>Sir Edmund Lechmere, Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Maguire</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 81.]	
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Sale of Intoxicating Liquors (Ireland) Bill —Ordered (<i>Sir Thomas Lea, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. W. Johnston, Mr. Jordan, Colonel Sanderson, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Diamond, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Webb, Mr. William Kenny, and Mr. Kennedy</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 83.]	
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Bishopric of Bristol Act (1884) Amendment Bill—Ordered (*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Sir Edward Hill* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 88.]

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NAVAL AND MILITARY DEFENSIVE PREPARATIONS—Amendment proposed, To leave out from the word “That” to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

“This House, before voting supplies for the maintenance of Military establishments in the United Kingdom, seeks an assurance from Her Majesty’s Government that the Estimates for that purpose submitted to it are framed upon consideration of the needs of possible war by sea and land, and upon a consideration of advice tendered in that behalf by such Officer of each Service as is fitted to command in war Her Majesty’s forces of that Service,”—(*Sir Charles Dilke*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :”—After Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn ... 507

Main Question again proposed—

EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVE SOLDIERS—Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word “That,” to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

“This House deploras the want of employment among discharged and Reserve men, and calls on the Government to remedy the evil by strengthening the existing voluntary institutions or forming a bureau at the War Office for that purpose,”—(*Major Rasch*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :”—After Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* ... 519

Main Question again proposed—

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Main Question put, and *agreed to* ... 521

SUPPLY—considered in Committee—

(In the Committee.)

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 155,347, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty’s Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895,”—(*The Secretary of State for War*) (*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman*).

After Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* ... 549

2. £5,981,000, Pay, &c. of the Army (General Staff, Regiments, Reserve, and Departments)

3. £100, Ordnance Factories :—After short Debate, Vote *agreed to* ... 550

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WAYS AND MEANS—considered in Committee—

(In the Committee.)

1. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1894, the sum of £577,222 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.
2. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895, the sum of £5,981,100 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom,—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next ; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

PUBLIC PETITIONS—

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred all Petitions presented to the House, with the exception of such as relate to Private Bills ; and that such Committee do classify and prepare abstracts of the same, in such form and manner as shall appear to them best suited to convey to the House all requisite information respecting their contents, and do report the same from time to time to the House ; and that the Reports of the Committee do set forth the number of signatures to each Petition only in respect to those signatures to which addresses are affixed :—And that such Committee have power to direct the printing *in extenso* of such Petitions, or of such parts of Petitions, as shall appear to require it :—And that such Committee have power to Report their opinion and observations thereupon to the House :

The Committee was accordingly nominated of :—Mr. Benn, Mr. Biddulph, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Byles, Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, Mr. Crombie, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Leake, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Mr. Mulholland, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Tollemache, and Mr. Henry J. Wilson.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum,—(*Sir Charles Dalrymple.*)

LORDS, MONDAY, MARCH 19.

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Motion *agreed to* :—*Ordered*, “That the said Orders be printed and published, and affixed to the doors of this House and Westminster Hall” (No. 7.)

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered on Monday next, in order to its being dispensed with for that day's Sitting.

COMMONS, MONDAY, MARCH 19.

MR. SPEAKER—Indisposition—Mr. Speaker was reported to be still indisposed and Mr. Mellor took the Chair as Deputy Speaker.

NEW WRIT ISSUED FOR COUNTY OF ESSEX (SOUTH OR ROMFORD DIVISION).

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IRISH VETERINARY INSPECTORS—Question, Dr. D. Ambrose ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) ... 559

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“That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament” ... 588

CROWN LANDS BILL—

Ordered, “That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Crown Lands Bill, with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills,”—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert*).

MOTIONS.

—o—

PRIVILEGE (INTERVENTION OF PEERS AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS)—
Sessional Order [12th March 1894] relating to the Interference of Peers at Elections read ;

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That this House resolves that the Earl of Rosebery, a Peer of Parliament, First Lord of the Treasury, President of the Council, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Midlothian, has by his speech on the 17th March in Edinburgh, infringed the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom by concerning himself in the election of a Member to serve for the borough of Leith for the Commons in Parliament,”—(*Lord Randolph Churchill*).

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Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"This House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*) ... 598

After Debate, Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived* :—Words *added* ... 608

Main Question, as amended, put :—*Resolved*, That this House do now proceed with the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read :—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair :"—

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYÉS IN THE DOCKYARDS—Resolution—

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"In the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Government do pay in the Royal dockyards and other Naval establishments wages equivalent to the trades unions' rates of wages as are generally accepted as current in each trade, either of the district or of districts, where the work performed is of analogous character,"—(*Mr. Kearley*,)—instead thereof.

After Debate, Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *agreed to* ... 659

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THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE—Observations, Commander Bethell ... 660

After Debate, Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Harland*) ... 675

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SUPPLY—REPORT—Resolutions [16th March] reported, and *agreed to*.—
[See page 521.]

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Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* and *Sir J. T. Hibbert* :)—Bill presented, and read first time.

Places of Worship (Sites) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. John Ellis*, *Mr. Billson*, *Mr. Charles Fenwick*, *Mr. Herbert Lewis*, *Mr. Perks*, *Mr. Henry J. Wilson*, and *Mr. Carvell Williams* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 90.]

Trust Companies Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Wootton Isaacson*, *Colonel Howard Vincent*, *Mr. Lawrence*, *Major Rasch*, and *Mr. Henniker Heaton* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 93.]

Food Adulteration Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Wootton Isaacson*, *Mr. Brooke Robinson*, *Mr. Cremer*, *Mr. Barrow*, and *Mr. Graham* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 92] ... 676

Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Neville*, *Mr. Willow*, and *Mr. W. F. D. Smith* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 91.]

Joint Stock Companies' Register Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Clough* and *Mr. Kimber* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 94.]

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SUPPLY—Committee—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main
Question [19th March], "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the
Chair :"—Question again proposed :—Debate resumed.

THE NAVY—The "Victoria" Disaster—Debate thereon :—Question put, and
agreed to.

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NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

1. 83,400, Men and Boys—Statement, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) :—After Debate, Vote *agreed to* ... 783
2. £3,918,500, Wages, &c., of Officers, Seamen, Boys, Coastguard, and Marines :—Vote *agreed to*.

ARMY EXCESSES, 1892-3.

784

3. £100, Army (Ordnance Factories) Excess 1892-3 :—Vote *agreed to*.

CIVIL SERVICE EXCESSES, 1892-3.

4. £685 14s., Civil Service Excesses, 1892-3 :—Vote *agreed to*.
Resolutions to be reported To-morrow :—Committee to sit again To-morrow.

M O T I O N S .

—o—

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS (HOUSE OF COMMONS)—Motion for a Select Committee—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Select Committee be appointed to control the arrangements for the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms in the Department of the Serjeant-at-Arms attending this House.”
—(Mr. T. E. Ellis).

After short Debate, Vote *agreed to*.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of.—Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Agg-Gardner, Lord Burghley, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Fellowes, General Goldsworthy, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Leveson-Gower, Mr. Loder, Mr. McArthur, Mr. P. J. Power, Mr. Alfred Thomas, and Dr. Tanner.—*Ordered*, That Three be the quorum,—(Mr. T. E. Ellis)

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Rivers Pollution Prevention Bill—*Ordered* (Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Sir John Dorrington, Mr. Barran, Sir Henry Howorth, and Dr. Farquharson :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 95.]

Industrial and Provident Societies Act (1893) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Howell, Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Bartley, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, and Mr. Charles Fenwick :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 96.]

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Penshaw, Captain Hope, Captain Sinclair, Mr. Parker Smith, Sir John Kinloch, Mr. Maxwell, and Dr. Farquharson :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 97.]

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Merchandise Marks Acts (1887 and 1891) Amendment (Cutlery) Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Henry J. Wilson :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 98.]

Ground Game Act (1880) Extension Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Lambert, Earl Compton, Mr. Channing, Mr. Billson, Mr. John H. Roberts, and Mr. Luttrell :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 99.]

Foreign Meat Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Lambert, Mr. Yerburch, Dr. Farquharson, Sir John Kennaway, and Mr. Billson :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 100.]

Sport Regulation Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. A. C. Morton, Mr. Barran, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Diamond, General Goldsworthy, Major Jones, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. E. J. C. Morton, Mr. Schwann, and Mr. Angus Sutherland :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 101.]

Return Tickets Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. A. C. Morton, Mr. Bougfield, Mr. John Burns, Dr. Clark, Sir John Leng, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Mr. Picton, Mr. Provand, Sir Albert Rollit, and Dr. Tanner :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 102.]

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Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment Bill —Ordered (<i>Dr. Clark, Mr. Angus Sutherland, Mr. Weir, Dr. Macgregor, and Sir Donald Macfarlane</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 103.]	
Women's Franchise Bill —Ordered (<i>Dr. Clark, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. C. B. McLaren, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir William Wedderburn, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham)</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 104.]	787
Tenant Farmers' Sporting Rights Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Luttrell, Mr. Benson, Mr. Burnie, Mr. Billson, Mr. Logan, Mr. Halley Stewart, and Sir William Wedderburn</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 105.]	
Workmen's Houses Tenure Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Mr. John Wilson (Durham), and Mr. Philipps</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 106.]	
Irish Education Act (1892) Amendment Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Field, Dr. Kenny, Mr. John Redmond, and Mr. Clancy</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 107.]	
Solicitors (Ireland) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Field and Dr. Kenny</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 108.]	
Clubs Registration (Ireland) Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Field and Dr. Kenny</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 109.]	
Outdoor Provident Relief Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Bartley, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, and General Goldsworthy</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 110.]	
Occupying Tenants' Enfranchisement Bill —Ordered (<i>Mr. Bartley, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, and General Goldsworthy</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 111.]	
Solicitors' Examination Bill —Ordered (<i>Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Perks, Mr. Billson, and Mr. Chance</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 112]	788
Kingston-upon-Hull (Court of Record) Bill —Ordered (<i>Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Charles Wilson, Sir Seymour King, Mr. Clarence Smith, Commander Bethell, and Mr. Wilson-Todd</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 113.]	
Grocers' Certificates (Scotland) Abolition Bill —Ordered (<i>Sir John Leng, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Mr. Crombie, and Mr. Dalziel</i> :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 114.]	

WAYS AND MEANS—considered in Committee.

1. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ended the 31st day of March, 1893, the sum of £785 14s. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.
2. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895, the sum of £3,918,500 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow ; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21.

Mr. SPEAKER —Indisposition—Mr. Speaker was reported to be still indisposed, and Mr. Mellor took the Chair as Deputy Speaker	789
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE —Resolved, “That the House do meet To-morrow at Two of the clock,”—(<i>The Chancellor of the Exchequer.</i>)	

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SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1894-5.

(VOTE ON ACCOUNT.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a sum, not exceeding £4,199,768, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895” ... 789

After Debate, Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That the Item of £1,160,000, for Public Education in England and Wales, be reduced by £500,”—(*Mr. J. G. Lawson.*) ... 803

After Debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed ... 831

Motion made, and Question proposed,

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After short Debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn ... 843

Original Question again proposed—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That the Item of £5,000, for Highlands and Islands of Scotland (Public Works and Communications) be reduced by £100,”—(*Mr. Weir*) ... 847

After short Debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn ... 850

Original Question put, and *agreed to*:—Resolution to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow ... 851

SUPPLY—REPORT—Resolutions [20th March] reported, and *agreed to*.— [See page 749.]

Ordered, That the Resolution which, upon the 19th day of this instant March, was reported from the Committee of Supply, and which was then agreed to by the House, be now read,

“That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 155,347, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty’s Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895.”

Army (Annual) Bill—*Ordered*, “That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army; and that Mr. Secretary Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, and Mr. Woodall do prepare and bring it in.” Bill presented, and read first time. Bill to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be *printed*. [Bill 116.]

WAYS AND MEANS—considered in Committee

(In the Committee.)

852

Resolutions [20th March] reported,

1. “That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ended 31st day of March, 1893, the sum of £785 14s. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.”
2. “That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895, the sum of £3,918,500 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.”

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, “That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolutions.”

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Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

After short Debate, Amendments *agreed to*:—Bill reported, with an amended Title :—As amended, to be considered To-morrow.

M O T I O N S .

—o—

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS (HOUSE OF COMMONS) EXPENSES— Motion for,

“Return showing detailed receipts and expenditure of Kitchen Committee for the years ending the 31st day of December, 1891, the 31st day of December, 1892, and the 31st day of December, 1893.”

After short Debate, Motion postponed.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 115] 853

Road Subvention Abolition (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (Sir Charles Cameron, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Baird, Mr. Robert Wallace, Sir James Carmichael, Mr. M'Ewan, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Paul, and Mr. Provand:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 117.]

Public-Houses (Hours of Closing) (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Mr. Hunter, Sir John Leng, and Mr. Beith:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 118.]

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Courtney, Mr. Bolitho, Sir Thomas Lea, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Brynmor Jones, Colonel Bridgeman, and Mr. Alexander Cross:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 119.]

Jury Law Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, and Mr. Havelock Wilson:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 120.]

Factory and Workshops Act (1891) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (Sir Henry James, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Mowbray, and Mr. Fenwick:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 121.]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE—

Ordered, That Mr. Wodehouse be discharged from the Select Committee of Public Accounts.

Ordered, That Mr. Cameron Corbett be added to the Committee,—(Sir J. T. Hibbert.)

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL—Observations on Motion for Adjournment:—Motion *agreed to* 854

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NEW WRIT ISSUED FOR LANARKSHIRE (MID DIVISION).

Q U E S T I O N S .

—o—

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ADJOURNMENT—EASTER—

Resolved, "That this House at its rising this day do adjourn till Saturday next, and at its rising on Saturday, do adjourn till Thursday, 29th March. That on Saturday, as soon as the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill has been passed, Mr. Deputy Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 880

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—REPORT—Resolution [21st March] reported,

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1894-5.

(VOTE ON ACCOUNT.)

"That a sum, not exceeding £4,199,768, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895, namely:—[See page 789.]

After short Debate, Resolution agreed to 894

Army (Annual) Bill (No. 116)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

After short Debate, Motion agreed to :—Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 29th March 895

MOTIONS.

—o—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill—Ordered (*Sir Walter Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre*) :—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 122.]

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—Bill, as amended, considered ; to be read the third time upon Saturday 896

COMMONS, SATURDAY, MARCH 24.

Mr. SPEAKER—Indisposition—Mr. Speaker was reported to be still indisposed, and Mr. Mellor took the Chair as Deputy Speaker.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read the third time”—

THE MAGAZINE RIFLE—After short Debate, Motion *agreed to* ... 900
Bill read the third time, and passed.

Whereupon, in pursuance of the Order of the House of 22nd March, Mr. Deputy Speaker adjourned the House until Thursday, 29th March, without Question put.

LORDS, MONDAY, MARCH 26.

Address in Reply to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech—

Her Majesty's Answer to the Address of Monday the 12th instant reported, and Address and Answer to be printed and published.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order), and dispensed with for this day's Sitting.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; then (Standing Order XXXIX. having been dispensed with) Bill read 2^a; Committee negatived; Bill read 3^a, and passed.

LORDS, THURSDAY, MARCH 29.

COMMISSION—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill; received the Royal Assent ... 901

COMMONS, THURSDAY, MARCH 29.

Mr. SPEAKER—Indisposition—Mr. Speaker was reported to be still indisposed, and Mr. Mellor took the Chair as Deputy Speaker.

COMMISSION—Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—the House went;—and being returned;—

Mr. Deputy Speaker reported the Royal Assent to:—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1894.

Address in Reply to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech—

The Vice Chamberlain of the Household (Right hon. Charles R. Spencer) reported Her Majesty's Answer to the Address.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

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NEW MEMBER SWORN—Ronald Craufurd Munro-Ferguson, Esquire, for the Leith District of Burghs.

ADJOURNMENT—LOSS OF THE “PORT YARROCK”—

Mr. Havelock Wilson, Member for Middlesbrough, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, “The loss of life caused by the loss of the British sailing vessel *Port Yarrock*,” but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Deputy Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and less than 40 Members having accordingly risen :—

The House proceeded to the Business of the Day.

M O T I O N S .

Equalisation of Rates (London) Bill—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the Equalisation of Rates as between different parts of London,”—(*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre*) ... 907

After short Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill ordered (*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Walter Foster, and Mr. Sydney Buxton :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 124] ... 913

Conciliation Bill—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the settlement of labour disputes,”—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

After short Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill ordered (*Mr. Mundella, Mr. Secretary Asquith, and Mr. Burt :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 125] ... 919

O R D E R S O F T H E D A Y .

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read ; Motion made, and Question proposed,
“That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair :”—

CIVIL SERVICE—Resolution—

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word “That,” to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

“It is desirable to recruit the First Division of the Civil Service by promotion from the Second Division,”—(*Mr. Field.*)

After short Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

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3. £30,855, Houses of Parliament Buildings :—After short Debate, Vote <i>agreed to</i>	976
4. Motion made, and Question proposed,	
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Motion made, and Question proposed, “That £30,200 be granted for the said Service,”—(<i>Mr. Bartley.</i>)	
After short Debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn.	
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Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (No. 1):—Read a second time, and committed.	
Local Government [Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (No. 2):—Read a second time, and committed.	
Behring Sea Award Bill—Ordered (<i>The Attorney General, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Sydney Buxton.</i>):—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 123.]	
Merchandise Marks (Files) Bill—Ordered (<i>Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Coleridge, Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, Colonel Howard Vincent.</i>):—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 126]	999
Hop Substitutes Bill—Ordered (<i>Mr. Brookfield, Mr. Channing, Sir Edmund Lechmere, Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Mr. Rankin, Colonel Warde, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, Mr. Godson.</i>):—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 127.]	

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON COMMISSION—Notice of Motion (Sir A. Rollit).

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read ; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair :"—

CHARITY COMMISSION (PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL)—Motion for a Select Committee :—Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"A Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is desirable to take measures to bring the action of the Charity Commission more directly under the control of Parliament, and to give it more effectual means of dealing with the business which will come before it,"—(*Mr. J. E. Ellis*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

After Debate, Question put, and negatived :—Words added.

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"That a sum, not exceeding £28,614, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1895, for Expenditure in respect of Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain."	
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Sport Regulation Bill (No. 101)—

Order for Second Reading read :—Motion made, and Question proposed,
“ That the Bill be now read a second time,”—(*Mr. A. C. Morton.*)

After short Debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned :—
Debate to be resumed on Wednesday next.

North Berwick Provisional Order Bill (No. 89):—Read a second time, and
committed 1092

M O T I O N S .

—o—

Magistrates' Qualification Bill—Ordered (*Mr. Dodd, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Arch, Mr. Channing, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Carvell Williams, Mr. Neville:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 128.]

Corporate Associations (Property) Bill—Ordered (*Mr. Howell, Mr. Barrow, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Benn, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Frye, Mr. Montagu, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Rowlands, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Stewart Wallace:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 129.]

Valuation (Metropolis) Bill—Ordered (*Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Cohen, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. J. Rowlands, Mr. Howell, Captain Norton:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 130.]

SUPPLY—Report—

Resolutions [29th March] reported, and *agreed to*.—[See p. 963.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 2.

Q U E S T I O N S .

—o—

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- THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACT**—Question, Mr. Caine ; Answer, The Secretary
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- THE RUSSO-GERMAN COMMERCIAL TREATY**—Question, Mr. J. W. Lowther ;
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THE BUDGET—Question, Mr. Goschen ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt).	
ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL—Question, Mr. Hanbury ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman).	

MOTIONS.

—o—

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill—Motion for leave—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to authorise an advance out of the general fund of moneys belonging to suitors of the Supreme Court in Ireland for the purposes of the Library used by the Bar of Ireland at the Four Courts, Dublin,"—(Mr. J. Morley).

After short Debate, Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered (Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert :)—Bill presented,
and read first time. [Bill 131] 1115

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STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)—Resolution—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order, No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by Order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order, No. 47, shall apply to the said Standing Committee.

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with 15 other Members, to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged.

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee,"—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"This House declines to sanction, in regard to Bills relating to one portion only of the United Kingdom, any plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of Committees of this House shall be fundamentally altered until it has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon a general scheme which shall extend a like treatment to Bills relating to each of the other portions of the United Kingdom,"—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour*)

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Question proposed, "That the words 'in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order, No. 47' stand part of the Question" ...

1137

After Debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned :—Debate to be resumed on Thursday ...

1215

Merchant Shipping Bill—Ordered (*Mr. Mundella, Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Burt* :)

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Resolutions [30th March] reported, and agreed to.—[See p. 1064.]

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS DISTRIBUTION—

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in superintending the form and regulating the Distribution of Parliamentary Papers.

Ordered, That Mr. Bartley, Mr. Causton, Mr. Cavendish, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Howell, Sir Herbert Maxwell, and Mr. Francis Stevenson be Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum,—(*Mr. Causton.*)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &c.—

Lords Message [19th March] communicating the following Resolution, namely—"That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament," considered.

Resolved, That this House doth concur with the Lords in the said Resolution.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith,—(*The Attorney General.*)

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 3.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

London County Council (Tower Bridge Southern Approach) Bill (*by Order*)—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time" ... 1217

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Bill read a second time, and committed ... 1238

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POLICE AND SANITARY REGULATIONS—Appointment of a Committee—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“ That the Committee of Selection do appoint a Committee, not exceeding Nine Members, to whom shall be committed all Private Bills promoted by Municipal and other Local Authorities, by which it is proposed to create powers relating to Police and Sanitary Regulations which deviate from, or are in extension of, or are repugnant to, the General Law.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

That Five be the quorum of the Committee,”—(*Mr. George Russell*) ... 1239

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to* ... 1243

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—o—

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Motion made, and Question proposed,

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Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill (No. 6)—Read a second time, and committed.

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Solicitors (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Carson, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. William Kenny, Mr. Barton, Mr. O'Keeffe, and Mr. Macartney*) :—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 133.]

Wild Birds' Protection Act (1880) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Herbert Maxwell, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Joseph Pease, Mr. Loder, Sir William Ingram, and Captain Bagot*) :—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 134.]

Boards of Conciliation Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Howell, Mr. Mather, Mr. Montagu, Sir Francis Powell, and Sir Albert Rollit*) :—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 135.]

Parliamentary Elections (County of London Saturday Poll) Bill—*Ordered* (*Captain Norton, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. John Burns*) :—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 136.]

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-
- Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill—Ordered** (*Mr. J. Morley, and Sir J. T. Hibbert :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 140.]
- Sale of Food and Drugs Act (1875), &c., Amendment Bill—Ordered** (*Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. Frederick Frye, Mr. Kearley, Dr. Farquharson, and Mr. Channing :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 141.]
- Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Acts Amendment (County of Bute) Bill—Ordered** (*Sir Charles Cameron, Dr. Clark, Sir Leonard Lyell, Mr. Weir, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Mr. Beith, and Mr. Angus Sutherland :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 142.]
- Patent Agents Registration Bill—Ordered** (*Mr. Warmington, Mr. David Thomas, and Mr. Byrne :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 143.]

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SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER)—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That the proceedings on the Motion for the Appointment of a Standing Committee on Scotch Bills, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House,”—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 203 ; Noes 173.—(Division List, No. 15.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Behring Sea Award Bill (No. 123)—

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read a second time,”—(*The Attorney General.*)

After Debate, Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed 1486

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)—Resolution. [Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [2nd April]—

“That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by Order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee.

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged.

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee,”—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

And which Amendment was, to leave out from the word “That,” to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

“This House declines to sanction, in regard to Bills relating to one portion only of the United Kingdom, any plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of Committees of this House shall be fundamentally altered until it has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon a general scheme which shall extend a like treatment to Bills relating to each of the other portions of the United Kingdom,”—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question again proposed, “That the words ‘in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47,’ stand part of the Question.”

After Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 232 ; Noes 250.
—(Division List, No. 16) 1501

Original Question again proposed, “That the words ‘in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47,’ stand part of the Question.”

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That this House do now adjourn,”
—(*Sir F. Dixon-Hartland.*)

After short Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 231 ; Noes 246.—(Division List, No. 17) 1503

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Original Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"

—(*Mr. Hanbury*) 1504

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to*.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (No. 1)—Reported with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed] ; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (No. 2)—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed] ; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of Working Classes) Bill (No. 3)—Reported with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed] ; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

M O T I O N S .

—o—

Notice of Accidents Bill—Ordered (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella, and Mr. Secretary Asquith* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 144.]

Grocers' Licences Abolition Bill—Ordered (*Mr. David Thomas, Mr. Lloyd-George, Major Jones, Mr. Alfred Thomas, Mr. Whittaker, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham)* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 145.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 6.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

EAST LONDON WATER BILL—Statement (*Mr. J. Stuart*) 1505

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STEAMSHIP ROUTES TO NEW YORK—Question, *Sir J. Leng* ; Answer, *The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley)*.

MAIL LANDING AT QUEENSTOWN AND MOVILLE—Questions, *Sir J. Leng, Captain Donelan* ; Answers, *The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley)* 1506

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INLAND BRANCH, GENERAL POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Diamond ; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) ...	1513
RUSSO-GERMAN COMMERCIAL TREATY—Question, Mr. Holland ; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) ...	1514
THE ARMY MEDICAL STAFF—Question, Mr. Webster ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman).	
THE VOLUNTEER DECORATION—Question, Mr. Webster ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) ...	1515
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Question, Mr. Webster ; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. H. Gladstone).	
REGISTRY OF DEEDS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. H. Plunkett ; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert).	
CIVIL SERVICE SUPERANNUATION—Question, Viscount Cranborne ; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir C. Russell) ...	1516
UGANDA—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell, Sir J. Kennaway ; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).	
SUNDAY PREACHING IN CORK—Questions, Mr. Barton, Captain Donelan, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. M. Austin, Mr. W. O'Brien, Mr. Crean ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).	
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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Questions, Mr. J. Chamberlain, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Mr. J. Rowlands, Sir C. Dilke, Mr. Bartley ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) ...	1520

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (No. 2)—Read the third time, and passed ...	1522
Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of Working Classes) Bill (No. 3)—As amended, considered ; to be read the third time upon Monday next.	
Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (No. 1)—As amended, considered ; to be read the third time upon Monday next.	
Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill (No. 122)—Read a second time, and committed.	
North Berwick Provisional Order Bill (No. 89)—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed] ; Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.	

MOTION.

—o—

Cockenzie Fishery Provisional Order Bill—Ordered (Sir G. Trevelyan and The Lord Advocate :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 146.]

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" ... 1523

ROYALTY RENTS AND WAYLEAVES—Resolution—

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

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ROYALTY RENTS AND WAYLEAVES—Resolution—*continued*.

"This House is of opinion that the present system of Royalty Rents and Wayleaves is injurious to the great industries, that the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Mining Royalties goes to show the injurious nature of the present system; and this House is of opinion that the time has arrived when such Rents and Wayleaves should be acquired by the State,"—(*Mr. Woods*,)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question" ... 1536

After Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 150; Noes 43.
—(*Division List*, No. 18) ... 1564

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," again proposed :—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Statement (*Mr. J. Morley*).

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present, House adjourned.

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 9.

SAT FIRST—The Lord Tweedmouth, after the death of his father ... 1565

THE BEAUMARIS SCHEME—Question, Lord Stanley of Alderley; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury and Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Rosebery*.)

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 9.)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS—

Message from the Commons that they concur in the Resolution of this House communicated to them on the 19th of March last on the subject of Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills as desired by this House.

Pistols Bill [*H.L.*].—Presented (*Lord Stanley of Alderley*); read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 11.)

Charitable Trusts Acts Amendment Bill [*H.L.*].—Presented (*Lord Halsbury*); read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 12.)

Limitation of Actions Bill [*H.L.*].—Presented (*The Lord Chancellor*); read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Monday next. (No. 13.)

Law of Inheritance Amendment Bill [*H.L.*].—Presented (*The Lord Chancellor*); read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Monday next. (No. 14.)

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 9.

QUESTIONS.

FOOTPATHS IN THE ISLAND OF LEWIS—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (*Sir G. Trevelyan*) ... 1566

ALLEGED ASSAULT BY A LEWIS SCHOOLMASTER—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (*Sir G. Trevelyan*) ... 1567

REPORTED WRECK OFF WARREN HASTINGS ISLAND—Question, Mr. D. Crawford; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (*Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth*) ... 1568

FRAUDS IN THE MEAT TRADE—Question, Mr. Seymour Keay; Answer, The President of the Board of Agriculture (*Mr. H. Gardner*).

METROPOLITAN COUNTERMEN AND TELEGRAPH CLERKS—Question, Mr. Butcher; Answer, The Postmaster General (*Mr. A. Morley*) ... 1569

DINGWALL GAME PROSECUTIONS—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Lord Advocate (*Mr. J. B. Balfour*) ... 1570

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KILLARNEY UNION—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).	
THE SLANEY FISHERIES—Question, Mr. Ffrench; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley)	1571
THE CASE OF EDWARD TAFFE—Question, Mr. Bodkin; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman)	1572
SKIBBEREEN CUSTOM HOUSE—Question, Mr. E. Barry; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert).	
DUBLIN CUSTOM HOUSE—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert)	1573
REPORTS OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF MINES—Question, Mr. Stuart-Wortley; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith)	1574
THE BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell, Sir A. Rollit, Mr. J. Chamberlain, Mr. Bartley; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton), The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey), The Attorney General (Sir C. Russell).	
NEW COUNTY MAGISTRATES—Question, Mr. Dodd; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. George Russell) ..	1575
BRITISH HERRINGS IN RUSSIA—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) ...	1576
M. KERCKHOVEN'S EXPEDITION—Questions, Commander Bethell; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).	
DINIZULU—Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton).	
PONDOLAND—Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton)	1577
PARISH COUNCILS—Question, Mr. Heneage; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre).	
H.M.S. "POWERFUL"—Question, Colonel Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth).	
ARMOUR-PIERCING PROJECTILES—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Woodall).	
LESSON BOOKS IN IRISH SCHOOLS—Question, Mr. Bodkin; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley)	1578
TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH BURGH HEATH—Question, Mr. Bucknill; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley).	
THE ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENTAL RIFLE—Questions, Mr. Weir; Answers, The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Woodall) ...	1579
MANUFACTURING COSTS AT ENFIELD AND SPARKBROOK—Questions, Mr. Weir, Mr. Barran, Mr. Jesse Collings; Answers, The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Woodall)	1580
THE NEWFOUNDLAND MINISTERIAL CRISIS—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell, Sir C. Dilke; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton)	1581
UGANDA—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell, Mr. Crawford; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).	
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THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON SECONDARY EDUCATION—Questions, Mr. Talbot, Viscount Cranborne; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland)	1583
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THE SUNDAY DISTURBANCES AT CORK—Questions, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Carson, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. W. Kenny, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. W. Russell ; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley)	1588
TEMPERANCE CANTEENS FOR THE ARMY—Question, Mr. A. Grove ; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) . . .	1591
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GAS CONSUMPTION IN PARLIAMENT HOUSES—Questions, Mr. J. Rowlands ; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. H. Gladstone) . . .	1592
TRINIDAD AND VENEZUELA—Questions, Colonel Howard Vincent ; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton).	
CATTLE SEIZURES IN COUNTY TYRONE—Question, Mr. Mac Neill ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley)	1593
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THE BUSINESS OF THE SESSION—Question, Mr. W. Kenny ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt)	1595
THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell ; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).	
THE BEHRING SEA ARBITRATION BILL—Questions, Mr. A. J. Balfour ; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt).	

NEW MEMBER SWORN—James Caldwell, Esquire, for the County of Lanark (Mid Division)	1596
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MOTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That for the remainder of the Session Government Business do have priority on Tuesday. That on Friday the House do meet at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to Tuesday and the Morning Sitting on Friday,”—(Sir W. Harcourt.)

After Debate, Amendment proposed, to leave out the words “for the remainder of the Session,” in order to insert the words “until Whitsuntide,”—(The Marquess of Carmarthen) 1635

Question proposed, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.”

After further Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 268 ; Noes 244.—(Division List, No. 19) 1642

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words “Government Business do have priority on Tuesday. That,” in order to insert the words “on Tuesday and,”—(Mr. Hanbury.)

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Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question"	1646
After Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 247 ; Noes 219.	
—(Division List, No. 20)	1672
Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,	
"Provided that in each week during the remainder of the Session the consideration of the Estimates in the Committee of Supply shall be set down as the first Order of the Day on one night on which Government business has priority,"—(<i>Mr. Henegge</i>) ...	1673
Question proposed, "That those words be there added."	
After short Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn	1674
After further short Debate, Main Question put :—The House divided :—	
Ayes 249 ; Noes 223.—(Division List, No. 21)	1675
<i>Resolved</i> , That for the remainder of the Session Government Business do have priority on Tuesday. That on Friday the House do meet at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to Tuesday and the Morning Sitting on Friday.	
Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into Committee of Supply,"—(<i>The Chancellor of the Exchequer.</i>)	
After short Debate, Motion <i>agreed to.</i>	

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Behring Sea Award Bill (No. 123)—	
Bill considered in Committee	1676
(In the Committee.)	
Clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, after short Debate, <i>agreed to.</i>	
Clause 8.	
Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 4, to leave out the words "so long as the scheduled provisions remain in force and no longer," in order to insert the words "until 1st May, 1900,"—(<i>Mr. Gibson Bowles</i>) ...	1683
Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."	
Question put, and <i>agreed to.</i>	
Clause <i>agreed to</i>	1684
It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.	
Committee report Progress.	
Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will immediately resolve itself into Committee on the Bill,"—(<i>The Attorney General.</i>)	
After short Debate, Question put, and <i>agreed to.</i>	
Bill again considered in Committee	1685
Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Preamble stand part of the Bill."	
After short Debate, Motion <i>agreed to.</i>	
Bill reported, without Amendment ; read the third time, and passed ...	1686

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Solicitors' Examination Bill (No. 112)—

Second Reading.

After short Debate, Bill read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of Working Classes) Bill 1687 (No. 3)—Read the third time, and passed.

Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (No. 1)—Read the third time, and passed.

North Berwick Provisional Order Bill (No. 89)—Read the third time, and passed.

Prevention of Cruelty to Children Bill (No. 44)—Considered in Committee.

Clause 1. Committee report Progress ; to sit again upon Thursday.

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill (No. 97)—Read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.

Trustee Act (1893) Amendment Bill (No. 58)—Read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.

M O T I O N S .

—o—

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. George Russell and Mr. Secretary Asquith :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 147.]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill—*Ordered* (Sir W. Foster and 1688 Mr. Shaw-Lefevre :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 148.]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill—*Ordered* (Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 149.]

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill—*Ordered* (Mr. Mundella and Mr. Burt :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 150.]

Fatal Accidents Inquiry (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (The Lord Advocate, Sir George Trevelyan and The Solicitor General for Scotland :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 151.]

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Authorised Edition)

IN THE
THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
APPOINTED TO MEET 12 MARCH 1894, IN THE FIFTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1894.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 12th March 1894.

THE PARLIAMENT, which had been prorogued from Monday, the 5th day of March, met this day for the despatch of business.

The Session was opened by Commission.

The HOUSE of PEERS being met,

THE LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House,

"That Her Majesty, not thinking it fit to be present here this day, has been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued under the Great Seal, in order to the opening and holding of this Parliament."

Then Five of the LORDS COMMISSIONERS—namely, The Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell), The Marquess of Ripon, Earl Spencer, The Marquess of Breadalbane, and Lord Carrington—being in their Robes, and seated on a form placed between the Throne and the Woolsack—commanded

the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod to let the Commons know,

"The Lords Commissioners desire their immediate attendance in this House to hear the Commission read,"

Who being at the Bar, with their Deputy Speaker :—

The Commission was read by the Clerk :—Then

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR delivered HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH to both Houses of Parliament, as follows :—

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

"I regret, in view of the recent completion of your arduous labours, to have to summon you so soon to renew them.

My relations with foreign Powers continue to be amicable and satisfactory.

The negotiations between my Government and that of the Emperor of Russia for the settlement of frontier questions in Central Asia are proceeding in a spirit of mutual confidence and goodwill, which gives every hope of an early and equitable adjustment.

Negotiations are also in progress with the Government of the United States for the purpose of executing the Award of the Court of Arbitration on the question of the Seal Fisheries in the Behring Sea.

I have pleasure in also informing you that the protracted and intricate arrangements for fixing the frontier between my Burmese dominions and those of the Emperor of China have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the signature of a formal Convention.

Two collisions, accompanied by a lamentable loss of life, have lately occurred with French colonial forces in West Africa. I await the result of the inquiry instituted with regard to these deplorable occurrences in the full confidence that they will be examined in the calm and dignified temper that befits two great nations on such an occasion.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

The Estimates for the Public Service of the year will be laid before you. They will be found to make full and adequate provision for the defence of the Empire.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

The recent improvement in the state of Ireland has been continuous and marked, and agrarian crime has been reduced under the administration of the ordinary law to the lowest point that has been reached for the last fifteen years.

The condition, however, of a considerable body of evicted tenants in that country requires early attention, and a measure will be submitted to you with a view to a reasonable settlement of a question deeply affecting the well-being of Ireland.

Bills will be submitted to you for the amendment of registration, and the abolition of plural voting at Parliamentary elections.

Measures will be laid before you dealing with the Ecclesiastical Establishments in Wales and Scotland.

There will also be presented Bills having for their object the equalization of rates in London; the establishment of a system of Local Government in Scotland, on the same basis as that recently accorded to England and Wales, and the exercise of a direct local control over the liquor traffic.

You will also be asked to consider measures for the promotion of conciliation in labour disputes; for the amendment of the Factory and Mines Acts; and for the reform of the present method of conducting inquiries into fatal accidents in Scotland.

Upon all your labours and deliberations I humbly implore the blessing and guidance of Almighty God."

Then the Commons withdrew.

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed.

PRAYERS.

ROLL OF THE LORDS.

Garter King of Arms attending, delivered at the Table (in the usual manner) a List of the Lords Temporal in the Third Session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom: The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

SAT FIRST.

The Duke of Bedford, after the death of his brother.

TOOK THE OATH.

The Earl of Buckinghamshire.

SELECT VESTRIES.

Bill, *pro formâ*, read 1st.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER
MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

The QUEEN'S SPEECH reported by the
LORD CHANCELLOR.

*LORD SWANSEA, in moving that a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty in answer to Her Gracious Speech, said, he would endeavour as far as possible to avoid matters of controversy, and would simply comment shortly

on the various items of the Speech—perhaps at greater length on the portion of it more essentially affecting his own country, Wales. In the first place, our relations with Foreign Powers were stated to be amicable and satisfactory. Nothing could be of greater value to this country than the blessings of peace. We were greatly indebted for our present position with foreign nations to the noble Marquess opposite and to the noble Earl who had just relinquished the Seals of the Foreign Office. Their Lordships would also have the entire confidence in the future administration of this most delicate and important Department so long as it was in the hands of the noble Earl below him. They had gauged his great powers and tact in leading and guiding the affairs of that House. He had gained the entire confidence of noble Lords on both sides of the House. Next they were informed that negotiations with Russia in regard to the frontiers in Central Asia were proceeding with mutual confidence and goodwill. Nothing could be more important to our Indian Empire than the defining of our North-Western frontier. So, again, it was most important that the Award which would, he hoped, settle for ever the vexed question of the Seal Fisheries with the United States should be conducted in such a manner as to satisfactorily carry out the Award. Then it was most satisfactory to hear that the frontier of Her Majesty's Dominions in Burmah had been amicably settled with the great Empire of China. The collisions which had occurred with the French colonial troops in West Africa must be deplored, and they were glad to be informed that the inquiries were being conducted in a calm and dignified manner. Their Lordships would also be glad to hear that the Estimates would include such a sum as would fully provide for the defence of our Empire. No one could be more impressed than himself with the wisdom of keeping up a strong Navy, such a Navy as would ensure the safety of our commerce as far as was possible in these difficult days of swift cruisers. Nothing could be more for the interests of this country than that our Navy should be upheld in full force. No doubt the noble Earl below would, if challenged, be able to explain how fully this question had occupied his attention, and how

fully it would be dealt with. Then they were informed that there was less agrarian crime in Ireland than there had been for some 15 years past. He was not called on to enter into the causes which had led to that decrease, and he had no desire to provoke discussion and debate, it was quite unnecessary to do so now. They were informed that the condition of the evicted tenants required attention, and that a measure would be immediately introduced to deal with that difficult question. He earnestly hoped their Lordships would receive any such measure with favour, because undoubtedly any reasonable settlement was better than a continuance of discontent, which, as they had seen in past times, had been produced by the rejection of such a measure. That experience should prevent a similar mistake being again made. Then they were informed that a Bill would be introduced for the amendment of registration and for the abolition of plural voting. That seemed an exceedingly simple matter, and he had been astonished to hear the vigorous attack made by the Duke of Devonshire on that question. He could not understand why there should be any danger of gerrymandering in such a measure as the abolition of plural voting. He might be very innocent, but it appeared to him to be a very simple matter. Secrets might exist of which he was not aware; but he thought really that the Bill might be endorsed as one for the abolition of gerrymandering. Well, then came the question in which he was so deeply interested as a Welshman. It was announced that measures would be introduced dealing with the Ecclesiastical Establishments in Wales and Scotland. He congratulated his countrymen on the fact that Wales stood first. It would bring joy to the souls of tens—of hundreds of thousands of Welshmen, for on no question were they so deeply interested as on this. If the desire of Wales for Disestablishment is gauged by the number of her Parliamentary Representatives it could hardly be overstated; out of 32 Members returned by Wales and Monmouthshire, 29 are in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment of the English Church in Wales. Did not that forcibly indicate the desire of the Welsh people? He

did not know what stronger evidence could be required. In his early days—when the representation of Wales was pretty nearly equally divided between Liberals and Conservatives—he had no hesitation in saying that a Bill for Disestablishment and Disendowment would be the most Conservative measure that could possibly be passed. He could speak with ample knowledge, having represented Welsh constituencies for 36 years. He had represented the great County of Glamorgan up to the time when it was broken up, and afterwards a great constituency within it. That county represented 40 per cent. of the entire inhabitants of Wales, and he therefore could speak as knowing the feelings not only of a very large constituency, but with perfect knowledge of the opinions of the whole country. He approached the question with an entirely open and judicial mind. He was a Churchman and came of a Church family. He had been mainly instrumental in building two churches. Therefore, he was certainly not a church destroyer. But he could also claim to have laid the foundation stones of more Nonconformist chapels than probably any man alive. He had always gone upon the principle of—first a Christian and then a Churchman—a sound and right one as he believed. The present position of the religious question in Wales ought to be stated pretty fully. It had never, as far as he was aware, been seriously put before their Lordships, and was not very generally known throughout the country. It might be asked how was it Nonconformity had taken such a strong hold in Wales. That fact had chiefly arisen from two causes: first of all, the neglect of the Church and nepotism in Church preferments in bye-gone days—he would not say now, for he could bear testimony to the efforts of the Church in Wales during recent times. But in past times the Church, by gross neglect, lost her hold entirely upon the Welsh people. He desired to raise no controversy whatever, and would be very sorry indeed to give the House the history he could give of the religious question in bye-gone times in Wales. But there was another reason why Nonconformity had obtained so strong a hold in Wales—the enormous increase of her population. His own

part of Wales had increased more than any other portion of the United Kingdom, except, perhaps, the Metropolitan area. In 1861 the population of Wales and Monmouthshire was 1,296,000; in 1891 it was 1,776,000, an increase of 480,000 souls in that period. If it had not been for Nonconformity no spiritual provision could have been made for that enormous increase. In his own county by the Census of 1861 (when he first represented it) the population was 326,000; in 1891 it was 693,000, an increase in that county alone of 366,800 people. How could their religious wants have been possibly provided for but by the efforts of the Nonconformists? Under the Church parochial system it was very difficult to build churches. He could speak from experience of the difficulties which had to be confronted. First, the consent of the patron had to be obtained, then the consent of the Incumbent; then a district had to be assigned legally, and then the title to the land had to be proved; afterwards the Church had to be endowed, and the whole of the funds for building it had to be provided, because it could not be consecrated with a debt upon it without an endowment. It was quite impossible for bodies of men who were not rich to fulfil all those conditions, and he would therefore say without hesitation that had it not been for the Nonconformists the religious wants of the people could not possibly have been met. Mostly poor people, they would not have been able to find the money, and the only alternative for that great population would have been heathendom. Therefore, as a Christian, he had always rejoiced at the great efforts which had been made by the Nonconformist Bodies. If the Church in Wales were disestablished, the question which greatly exercised the minds of noble Lords opposite was, would Wales be religious? The country would not be one single atom less religious than it is now. Religion in Wales is not dependent upon the Church. The Welsh are a deeply religious people. Whenever a colliery is opened in some remote valley theretofore only grazed by a few sheep, the men immediately provide for their religious wants. The first thing they do is to establish what they rightly called a “Church.” A few earnest God-fearing men met

together in some small cottage or hovel and there joined in prayer. From that sprang very soon a small chapel. Those chapels increased as the district grew in population, and so in Glamorgan there were many chapels which might almost be called cathedrals from the numbers they accommodated. Figures old, but still good, showed that the Welsh were a highly religious people. Those figures obtained by him a few years ago when he went into the question of higher education in Wales showed that the numbers of Bibles sold in that country were very largely in excess of those sold in England; for while in England there were 24 per 1,000, there were 41 in Wales—nearly double the number. Again, the Sunday School system in Wales was magnificent, and the teaching under it was carried out more completely than in any other part of the British dominions. Poor hardworking men were willing to give up their Sunday leisure for the purpose of teaching the children the pure truths of Christianity. What was the outcome of all this? An almost entire absence of crime, or at any rate a large diminution of it, as compared with England. When the statistics were examined last by him there were 14 people per 20,000 in prison in England, and in Wales 9, while the committals were 7 to 4 per 1,000. Did not those figures prove that the system of religious teaching, and the religious feelings of the Welsh people were far beyond those in England? It must also be remembered that a large portion of the crime in Wales was alien, committed by people coming into the country, Irish, English, and often by foreign sailors. He regretted there were no accurate statistics showing the proportions of Churchmen and Nonconformists in Wales. Dr. Reece, in his book upon Protestant Nonconformity in Wales, published in 1883, claimed for the Nonconformists 1,100,000; for the Church of England, 220,000; for the Roman Catholics, 30,000; and for the non-religious, 224,000; making in all 1,574,000, which was about the population at that time. The Rev. John Thomas, of Liverpool, gave at a meeting at Carnarvon very similar figures—namely, Nonconformists, 955,156; Churchmen, 228,571; Roman Catholics, 50,000; Irreligious, 337,540; total, 1,571,267, and showing that

the proportion of Church-people in the population was about 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$, and of Churchmen to Nonconformists 1 to $4\frac{1}{2}$. Those were the best statistics he was able to give their Lordships. Also might be called as a witness in the matter the late Dean of Bangor, who stated at the Church Congress in 1879 that the Church in Wales had lost five-sixths of the Welsh-speaking people, and survived only among the English-speaking middle and upper classes. That could not be considered, at any rate, the testimony of a witness in favour of Nonconformists. Alluding to the statement that the Nonconformists of Wales only existed on paper, the late Dean of Bangor made the pertinent reply that

“paper adherents did not give money, and the Welsh Nonconformists gave more than £300,000 a year.”

Nearly at the same time the Rev. Dr. Thomas said the Welsh Nonconformists gave £400,000 a year. It should be borne in mind that these were largely poor working men, not rich people; and surely, therefore, there must be something substantial in their love of their Creed—not a special one, for they were all just as much Christians as Churchmen, but preferred their special mode of managing and conducting their own religious affairs. The Nonconformists of Wales did not covet the endowments of the Church; they would not accept them if given over to them to-morrow. He had discussed this question with some of the leading Nonconformists both in Wales and England, and had been surprised at their aversion to receiving any endowment whatever. Therefore, never let it be said for a moment, for it could not be said with truth, that the desire for Disestablishment and Disendowment meant coveting the money of the Church. They were prepared to give that money to charitable objects, probably largely to those objects for which tithes were originally promoted; but they had no desire to receive it themselves. They felt that if they did it would be ruin to them, as they reposed entirely upon the voluntary system. That system was vital and active, and they knew that endowments were the very reverse. Their desire was for religious equality in the eye of the law. They were Protestants. It was not the case of Ireland, where the Irish Church had been disestablished more or

less in favour of the Roman Catholics. The Welsh held the same religious belief as their Lordships—the same Creeds. Of course, he could not say they accepted the Athanasian Creed any more than himself, but they held their belief as purely as the Apostolic Church from which they sprang. They were a moral God-fearing people, and a loyal people. He had had experience of their loyalty on many occasions. He remembered well addressing an open-air meeting of some 10,000 colliers on a hill-side in the Rhondda some years ago, and at the end of his speech, on his invitation, they all rose and gave three as ringing cheers for Her Most Gracious Majesty as were ever heard. Certainly there was no disloyalty among them. When the Prince of Wales did them the honour to go down to Swansea he was received with the greatest enthusiasm by hundreds of thousands of the people, nine out of ten of them Nonconformists. He had the honour of accompanying the Prince and Princess as they passed down the serried ranks, and could testify that the cheering and faces of the people gave remarkable evidence of their loyalty. Never let it be supposed that the Welsh were not a thoroughly loyal nation, deeply imbued as they were with their own religious feelings. Who had ever heard of a Welsh Socialist or Anarchist? He would challenge anyone to show him either an Anarchist or a Socialist in Wales. They were a thoroughly loyal God-fearing people, and had no animosity towards the Church. He had stood on public platforms where the Vicar of the parish had come forward to join in some charitable work, and had always seen him received with the deepest respect and accorded the highest and most prominent part in the function. There was absolutely no animosity among the Welsh towards the Church of England. All they asked was justice at their Lordships' hands, and that when this great question came before that House they would give it careful and sympathetic attention. If the question was to be fought, he, for one, was there to fight it. He had gone, he believed, to the very bottom of it—historically, religiously, and in every other way, and if God spared him he would fight this battle to the fullest extent of his power. He had

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dwelt at some length on the question because it was probably the subject upon which he had been selected to move the Address to Her Most Gracious Majesty. As he knew nothing about the measures for the equalisation of rating and the local government of Scotland he had nothing to say about them. Local control of the liquor traffic was a measure which he had always advocated, for no greater curse afflicted this country than drunkenness, and it behoved those who had charge of our legislation to do their utmost to reduce that enormous evil. He therefore trusted when the local veto question came before their Lordships that they would give it their careful attention, putting aside all Party questions and regarding it simply in the interests of our common humanity. The next question was conciliation in labour disputes; of that he had special knowledge. When the disastrous strike of 1877 occurred in Glamorgan he was County Member, and suggested the adoption of a sliding scale committee to deal with questions between masters and men, and to fix the basis of wages on the value of the coal. That was taken up by men of eminence, by Sir William Thomas Lewis, Mr. Archibald Hood, and others, who worked it through. He was unable himself to sit upon the committee on account of a personal question arising between himself and one of the representatives selected by the men—a Scotchman, however, not a Welshman. For 15 years that arrangement had kept a great mining population out of disastrous disputes. Then upon the Factory and Mines Act he could have spoken, having been consulted originally upon the measure by Sir George Grey. It was a matter of great importance, and he was glad the Government were taking it up. The recent strike showed the enormous influence which coal mining had upon the welfare of the country. Colliers never went underground but that they took their lives in their hands, and Parliament was bound to protect them as far as possible while engaged in their dangerous occupation. He would touch on only one more topic. He could not, as a follower of Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons for 41 years, conclude without alluding briefly to the right hon. Gentleman's retirement, enforced by the infirmities of old age, but

by no loss of mental power after 60 years' active and unceasing devotion to the service of his country and to the well-being of his fellow-men. Mr. Gladstone's political views were not shared in by the majority of their Lordships, but they nevertheless recognised his eminent services as well as his transcendent ability and brilliant oratory. He felt sure that they would desire that he should long enjoy the peace and repose he had so well earned. He felt that those few words were quite inadequate to do justice to a great and historical occasion. He thanked their Lordships for the attention with which they had listened to him, and begged to move that a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as followeth :—

Most Gracious Sovereign,—

"We, your most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer you our humble Thanks for the Gracious Speech which your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."—(*The Lord Swansea.*)

***LORD HAWKESBURY** said, he rose to second the Motion which had just been made by his noble Friend. In doing so he must express the wish that this task had been placed in abler hands than his. He was deeply aware of its difficulty and of his deficiencies in undertaking it. He felt that he should stand in great need of that kind forbearance which their Lordships had never failed to extend to one who addressed the House, as he did, for the first time. He should endeavour in the few remarks he had to make to follow the example of his noble Friend who preceded him in discussing the various matters that were now before the House free from all Party feeling, and from any controversial spirit. In reading the first few words of Her Majesty's Gracious Speech one's thoughts naturally fall upon the momentous event to which his noble Friend had just alluded, and which had taken place in the Party to which he had the honour to belong. He could not refrain from adding just one word to what had fallen from his noble Friend, in expressing, free from all Party spirit, the feeling of sympathy which he believed followed the great statesman (who had devoted a long and laborious life to the service of his country) from all sections of his fellow-countrymen—from those who had crossed swords, politically, with him, and

those who had followed him into the battle—in his well-earned retirement. He could not help feeling, and he thought the country felt it also, that the mantle of that great statesman had fallen upon worthy shoulders, and that those who had watched the career of the noble Earl who sat below him would feel that the honour of this great Empire was safe in his hands. He was glad to think that the first paragraphs of Her Majesty's Gracious Speech were such as they could all agree upon. It was a matter for hearty congratulation that Her Majesty was again able to announce at the beginning of another Session that we had peaceful relations with all Foreign Powers. It must be admitted that this happy condition of things was very much due to the continuity which had characterized our foreign policy in recent years, no matter which of the great political Parties had been in power. It must be admitted that it was due very much to the able manner in which the noble Marquess who sat opposite, and the noble Earl, the head of the Government, had presided over the foreign affairs of this nation. He was sure that it was a matter for congratulation that the difficult and delicate questions relating to the frontiers of Her Majesty's Dominions in India were in a fair way to a satisfactory settlement. They were told, with regard to the frontier on the Russian border of our great Empire in Asia, that the question was in the way of being satisfactorily settled, and, as his noble Friend had already said, it was a matter for great congratulation that it could be brought to a happy issue. Again, with regard to the North-Eastern Frontier of our Indian Possessions, it was equally a matter of very great satisfaction to think that a Treaty had happily been concluded with the Emperor of China, opening up possibilities of commerce between ourselves and that great nation whose capabilities in that respect were well known. He thought they might consider that the final carrying into effect of the award of the arbitrators with regard to the seal fisheries in the Behring Sea was another instance of the great value of the principle of arbitration in cases of dispute between friendly nations, and here again they must give credit to the noble Marquess opposite for having originated that arbitration. His noble Friend had alluded to the lamentable mistakes which had led to collisions between our forces and

the forces of France in West Africa, and the sad loss of life that had been incurred thereby. But they might draw some consolation from the patient and calm manner in which both nations had awaited further news and the result of inquiry into the causes of these unfortunate events, for it showed the close ties which bound the great nations of England and France together in amity and concord. Passing from foreign affairs, they came to the great question of national defence. He need not state that as a naval man himself, and as the grandson of one who for many years had a seat in that House, and who in his early days as a midshipman served in the old wars—for his grandfather was under fire in the old French war when he was only ten years old—he felt strongly on this subject and had it greatly at heart. It was no Party question. There was no Englishman worthy of the name who did not feel that it was of paramount importance to this great Empire that the Navy of England should be such, and that its provision for the future should be simply sufficient to enable it to cope with any possible combination between Foreign Powers, and to be entirely adequate to protect the enormous commercial interests of our Empire in every part of the world. He felt confident that Her Majesty's present Government had this matter very much at heart, and that they had given it their most serious consideration. He was quite certain that when the time came for the Government to lay their policy in this important matter before Parliament it would be found that they had made ample provision for the needs of this great branch of the Public Service, and for the defence of our interests in all parts of the world in the future. Coming to matters nearer home, he saw again that the Sister Island stood first. But he was happy to think that the saying which had become common of late years—"Ireland blocks the way"—could not be said to-day; and he was sure it was a matter of congratulation for all Parties that Her Majesty's Government were able to announce a marked decrease in the agrarian crime which had been so long rife in Ireland. There remained, however, he regretted to say, the condition of the evicted tenants in that country. He believed their state was very serious, and pressed for immediate attention, and he hoped, when the promised measure came before the

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House, it would be dealt with in a generous and open-handed manner, and that it would be remembered from the experience of former occasions that it was better to deal with those matters quickly, when pressing, as this question now was, for settlement. The next announcement in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech related to two measures concerning the representation of the people. One of the two measures alluded to—that connected with registration—was one which, admittedly, was not of a Party character, though, of course, in details there might be differences of opinion. It had been admitted by both Parties that our Registration Laws stood in need of amendment. It seemed strange that an election might, and often did, take place on a Register nearly two years old. All were agreed that the period of residence necessary to qualify for obtaining the franchise should be reduced; and surely, too, it was reasonable that the cost of registration and the difficulties which stood in the way of a man being placed on the Register should be removed or materially decreased. He was afraid that the other measure, popularly known as "One Man One Vote" might not be received with such general approval by all Parties. But, speaking for himself, he had always held the opinion, that now that the franchise had been extended, so that the principal basis of it was that of the householder in the counties, as well as in the boroughs, the residents of a constituency should be the men to elect their Representative without the interference of those who might have some slight property qualification, and who lived outside its limits. His noble Friend had spoken, as, of course, he had a right to do from his intimate knowledge of the subject at such length, and so clearly and fully, upon Welsh Disestablishment, that it needed no words of his. But he should say that he felt with regard to these Church questions that they should be dealt with in accordance with the needs and desires of the different nationalities which form the United Kingdom. That was the case when the Irish Church was dealt with. He believed the noble Marquess opposite shared that opinion, for though he did not, perhaps, approve of all the details of the measure he voted for the principle on the Second Reading of the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill in that House 25 years ago.

The noble Duke who sat on the Front Bench below the Gangway expressed the same opinion with regard to the Scotch Church. He had said it was a matter for the Scotch people to decide, and when, through their elected Representatives, they showed what their desire was in the matter, the subject would have to be taken in hand by the Government. Who could doubt what the desire of the Welsh people was, after the almost unanimous vote of their elected Representatives on more than one occasion when this question was discussed in Parliament during the past seven years? The Bills for the equalisation of rates in London, and for the establishment of Parish and District Councils in Scotland, were simply to carry out further and complete the system of Local Government Reform in the Metropolis in the one case; and in the other, to extend to Scotland the benefits of the measure passed for England and Wales during last Session. Then they had the measure which was introduced last year affecting the liquor traffic. It had always seemed to him that the inhabitants of a district had a right to have a voice as to the number of licences they desired in the district. A great question, which had been pressed very much to the front recently, and which he thought would be the question of the future, was the question, or rather, the questions, affecting labour. They had very recent experiences of the sad results of a lock-out in the coal trade; but when they remembered that it was at the invitation of the noble Earl now at the head of the Government that that lock-out was brought to an end in November last, and that they had reason to hope for happy results from the Board of Conciliation which had been formed in consequence of his intervention, they might very well anticipate good things from a further extension of the same principle. His noble Friend had alluded to the amendment of the Mines and Factories Acts. These Acts were beneficent measures, framed to safeguard the lives of those who toil in mines and factories, and to improve the conditions under which they worked. It was only natural that as years went by and public opinion advanced, further amendment of these Acts should be required. He was sure that the great mining districts were looking anxiously for the measures promised by the Government,

and he trusted that the Session would not close without their being passed into law. The remaining measure promised was one relating to Scotland. It was a Bill on which he was not qualified to speak; but he believed that it referred to the same interests as were dealt with in the Mines Act, and was one which in the mining districts of Scotland was looked forward to with great earnestness and anxiety. He thanked their Lordships for the patient hearing they had given him. He hoped he had not touched on any tender susceptibilities, or said anything to wound anyone from a Party point of view. He would conclude by seconding the Motion of his noble Friend.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I can begin with great confidence on this occasion by expressing the pleasure and the admiration with which I have listened to the two speeches which we have just heard. The noble Lord who has just sat down unfortunately has not before taken part in the Debates of this House. I trust it is an omission he will repair, especially as in many of his sentiments I am sure he will command the universal assent of the House. Of the noble Lord who moved the Address we cannot say the same. We have had the advantage on more than one occasion of admiring his eloquence, but never before had we so much occasion to admire the copiousness of its character and the width and the variety of the circumstances to which it could be applied. The noble Lord prided himself—I am not sure that here I am complimenting him—on the judicial character of his observations, and on the care with which he avoided subjects of controversy. My impression is, that if I wanted to avoid subjects of controversy I should not select for the topics of my speech the disestablishment of the Welsh Church, or the creed of St. Athanasius, or the extent to which Socialistic sentiments may be prevalent among the Radicals of Wales. But I have no doubt that the noble Lord gave us in that, as in all other things, the full measure of his knowledge, and after I had heard him I could easily understand that command which on another occasion he boasted he had obtained over the County Council of the county which he honours. The noble Lord has, I think, very fairly established his claim to great weight in this House from the length of time in which he has

taken part in the service of his country in Parliament; and the 41 years of which he can boast are, at least, an example of devoted attention to public life, which I trust that the generation which succeeds will not be slow to imitate. Both the noble Lords who spoke referred to the circumstance that this was a great historic occasion. It may be called a turning point in our political history. A great career has closed; a great figure that has been to the front in politics as long, I should think, as any man here can recollect, has passed from any active interference in public affairs. Very just and very natural expressions of admiration and devotion were uttered by the two noble Lords who have followed Mr. Gladstone. For us it is not possible on such an occasion to speak of his policy and of his measures, for it would introduce us into controversial ground, from which an occasion such as this should be sacred. But, at least, we, his opponents, sitting in a House where we have not been subject to the glamour of his eloquence, can offer our passing tribute to the most brilliant intellect that has been placed at the service of the State since Parliamentary government began, and to the courage and resolution and self-sacrifice and self-discipline with which he has continued exertions in behalf of the convictions he has acquired to the latest period that has ever been granted to an English statesman. And now his passage from the scene introduces us to the noble Earl who has for the first time undertaken the Leadership of the House. Of course, we shall differ much on political questions, but I think I can assure him of the heartiest welcome from the majority of this House. Whatever our differences may be, I am sure we shall meet in him a loyal aid in our efforts to perform our legislative duties, and, in spite of some rumours that have reached me of things that were said over the way, I do not doubt that when it comes to the test we shall find in him a zealous defender of the privileges of the House of Lords. At all events, I can only say this—that if he wants a model of the way in which the House should be led he has only to look to the example of the noble Earl who has just preceded him, and I am sure that when his career has a little advanced we shall be able to look back upon his Leadership of the House with as much gratification as

we do upon that of his predecessor. Turning to the speech itself, it is really uttering a truism and a platitude to say, what everybody has said, that it is much more remarkable for its omissions than for what it says. The foreign part of it is all very satisfactory. But somehow I think the future historian, if he gets hold of this paper, will think that we were indeed a nation to be congratulated that we had no history, and that the matters which concerned us in foreign affairs were of the least important and the least anxious description. Two boundaries crossing inaccessible mountains, and an arrangement how seals were to be killed—that I think is, to sum up, the foreign policy of the country as the noble Earl represents it to us. Of course, there is that unlucky matter of loss of life in West Africa, with respect to which he observes a very laudable and dignified reserve. I do not wish to press for explanations of matters upon which the Government think inopportune. I know well that great harm may be done by any precipitancy in that respect; but there are such places as Siam, Matabeleland, Uganda, and Egypt, whose names we have heard during the recess, with respect to which we have seen much angry controversy, and concerning which there must be some documents—I know there are documents—in the Foreign Office that the public would be glad to see. I will not press upon the noble Earl to take any measure with respect to publication of which his own judgment does not approve. I will only note in passing that the omission of these matters, with regard to which some very anxious questions exist, cannot but seem strange, not only to the future historian I have indicated, but to our contemporary critics in other parts of the world. When we come from the foreign part, which does not invite any observations, to the domestic part of the Speech, it is very natural that we should look to see how far there is absolute continuity of policy between the present Government and the Government that has just resigned. In fact, when we come to compare this Speech with the Speech that was delivered a little earlier than this time last year, I think that we may say that in the one Speech and in the other the Newcastle Programme has been pretty fairly represented. I think it would save much trouble to Her Gracious Majesty, and to the noble Lord her re-

presentative on the Woolsack, if in future Liberal Speeches with which we may be honoured the words were put in "Newcastle Programme as usual." I do not think the legislative achievements of the Government are likely to make a large hole in that programme, and I think the promises which, year by year, come to be addressed to us will be as full and as cheering in future years as they are at present. The only two differences which are, perhaps, a little noticeable, are that last year, at the beginning of a Parliament, the Government dwelt on the importance of shortening the duration of Parliaments. Well, the shortening of the duration of your life is a thing you think about a great deal less as you get older; and as the years are getting on in this present Parliament the anxiety for triennial or annual Parliaments is beginning to die away. Another omission is that last year it was proposed to endow the London County Council with greater powers. On this side of the House we are not in the least perplexed or puzzled to understand why the Government should not desire to endow the London County Council with greater powers. As far as we have been able to watch their proceedings we think they are very much in the condition in which England is in the mind of the late Prime Minister—they want discipline. And the discipline of a few more years in the exercise of the powers they possess will prepare them for the exercise of those further powers which the future will no doubt bring them. Beyond that, I observe that in the ecclesiastical questions, on which the noble lord dwelt with much unction, it is a fact that Wales comes before Scotland. I am told that something like a rebellion is impending in Scotland in consequence of this indignity; but those who criticise it observe that it is only a touching proof of the modesty of the noble Earl at the head of the Government, who naturally does not like to put his own country first. I observe that, whereas last year there were to be measures for preventing appointments in the Churches of Wales and Scotland, in this year measures are to be laid before you "dealing with" these Churches. I believe that in a certain class of society the phrase "dealing with" has an undoubtedly slaughterous meaning, and there can be no doubt that both in Wales and in Scotland the noble Earl at the

head of the Government is prepared to wield "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." I hope when he goes down to Scotland next week he will find the people there as enthusiastic disestablishers as he expects. But the really important point of difference is the mode in which Ireland is treated. Last year a measure of Home Rule was promised, this year Home Rule is not alluded to, but in place of it is promised a measure in favour of evicted tenants, which is in the nature of something in the pound to the Irish creditors of the Government, or a small composition. Of course, it is impossible to criticise that measure before we see it. I hope it will not be on the lines of the celebrated deliverances of Mr. Justice Mathew; but, whatever it may be, I think the Government will find it is an embarrassing way of getting rid of their Irish creditors. The money must come from somewhere. Either it will be taken out of the pocket of the unfortunate Irish landlords, and will involve a new blow to confidence in Ireland—a new hindrance to the restoration of that social peace which is Ireland's first necessity—or it will be taken out of the pockets of the English taxpayer at a moment when his resources are strained to the utmost; and I doubt whether it will be the most popular part, in England at all events, of the programme of the Government. But the most important part of it is that this promise ousts Home Rule. Even if we had not had those echoes from the Foreign Office of which I have spoken to re-assure us I have no doubt that Her Majesty's Government are fully sensible of the strength of the pledges under which they have placed themselves. I assume—it is impossible to assume anything else—that they are as sincere in putting forward their Home Rule policy as they were last year. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I quite expected that answering cheer. But if that is the case, I would submit that the clear duty of bringing the matter to as early an issue as they can is imposed upon them by those very convictions. That question of Home Rule is now in a state of suspense. It is in course of appeal; it is sent by appeal to the English people. Nobody believes that as long as England refuses Home Rule, Home Rule can be established in Ireland. On the other hand, everybody is aware that if England is willing to accept Home Rule, the

resistance of its antagonists will not prevail. I do not wish to hurt the national feelings of the noble Earl at the head of the Government, and I freely admit that if Scotland had as strong an aversion to Home Rule as England has that would be a bar to its adoption; but, dealing with the matter as we stand, the opinion of England for or against is the deciding judge in this issue of Home Rule. Well, then, the sooner we have the judgment the better; and the clearer the issue is presented in the constituencies the more satisfactory it will be to carry the decision and conviction that it is required. You are overlaying the issue with other and foreign issues which have nothing to do with it. Instead of calling the attention of the people of England to this question of Home Rule and asking their decision on that—infinity the most important question that was ever submitted to them—you have had one after another question devised in the hope that it would distract their attention and prevent them from devoting the whole of their ideas and thoughts to the great historical issue that is laid before them. Even to-night I think I observed something of the same policy. The noble Lord who spoke first informed us that he had been selected for the purpose of speaking upon the Welsh Church, and, instead of dwelling upon the issue of Home Rule, which is the issue before the English nation, he has covered the question with a mass of Welsh statistical detail which, for those who try to see with his eye and to penetrate through the volume of his eloquence, will entirely conceal the merits of the original question from their view. That has been the policy—the policy of obfuscating the eyes of the English constituencies, so that they shall not give a clear and fair judgment on the subject of Home Rule. My Lords, it may be good Parliamentary tactics, but it is a fatal policy for the benefit of the people of this country, and especially of the people of Ireland. The great object that we ought to have in view is to bring this controversy one way or another to a conclusion. Of course, I can understand that it would be useful in dealing with the Irish Parliamentary Party to hold this piece of legislative provender before their noses and to induce them to go on and go on from step to step as far as you wish,

The Marquess of Salisbury

and perhaps in the end you may not feed the faithful animal after all. But, though that may be very convenient from a Whip's point of view, it is deadly to the prosperity of the Irish people. If Home Rule is to be their future, the sooner they have it the better, and adapt themselves to it in such a way as they can. If England is to decide that they are to have Home Rule—and that to my mind is absolutely impossible—the sooner we know her decision the better. But if it be true that England will continue to resist Home Rule—and without her fiat it cannot be—surely the sooner you bring that conviction home to the mind of the Irish tenants the better for the future of Ireland and the social prosperity of her people. What we wish is, that they should understand that the state of things under which they live is a matter they must make the best of, and that they must turn their minds to other means of securing prosperity which lie before them. What we wish is to induce them to do as they can do now—to buy their holdings, become peasant proprietors, and, at the same time, to push forward that policy which is embodied in the Light Railways Act and Acts of that character, and which shall develop, as far as it is possible for a Government to develop, the agricultural prosperity of the country. If you can induce them to turn their attention to that, and induce them to become a peasant proprietary, they will be as conservative as agricultural proprietaries always have been. Time must be taken before that peaceful and salutary revolution can be accomplished—a long time it may be; but gradually a belief in law and order, arising from a firm and continuous application of its enforcement, gradually attachment to the soil, which has become their own, and in which all their interests are wrapped up, will induce them to lay aside their gloomy, dreary, and distracting politics, on which all their best efforts have been for years past wasted and thrown away, and in the whirlpool of which all that nature has given of wealth and prosperity to their country has been lost. Difficult as the task is, and long as the time may be before it is accomplished—long in the life of an individual, short in the life of a nation—the sooner they can buckle to the task the better. I earnestly urge the Government, therefore, not to allow any

consideration of Parliamentary tactics to induce them to do what the Queen's Speech leads us to suspect they will do—that is, to put off the question, merely renewing the promise of it from time to time, in order to keep together the majority by which they are sustained. I hope they will be led into a higher and more patriotic course, and take the earliest opportunity of deciding what the policy of this United Kingdom is to be for the greatest and most vital question which for centuries has been submitted to her decision.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, my first duty in the position which I now unworthily occupy is to return the thanks of Her Majesty's Government to the noble Lords who have moved and seconded the Address to the Crown. I will not dilate on either with the discursive interest displayed by the noble Marquess. But I will say that I fully appreciate the knowledge and the zeal with which the Mover applied himself to the consideration of a subject of which he is a master, and on which we shall hope to hear his sentiments whenever the Bill dealing with the Ecclesiastical Establishment in Wales comes before the House. I must also say a word in passing upon the singular charm with which my noble Friend the Seconder invested the often *jeune* task of seconding the Address. My Lords, I have also, as they had, the need for asking your Lordships' indulgence. We on this side of the House meet under the shadow of a great grief. A week ago we had, perhaps, the greatest Leader that any Party has ever been led by; and I must also say that the tribute of the noble Marquess to his merits, his character, and his genius left nothing to be desired on this side of the House. Every one can appreciate the heartiness of Mr. Gladstone's character and attainments, but there is one aspect of his career which makes his retirement especially pathetic and interesting. I mean the long reach over which his recollection passes. He heard the guns saluting the battle of Waterloo; he heard some of Mr. Canning's greatest speeches; he heard the Reform Debate in 1831 in this House and Lord Brougham's memorable speech. He was, over half a century ago, the right-hand man of Sir Robert Peel's famous Government; and when to this coating of history which he

acquired so long ago is added his own transcendent personality, one cannot, it seems to me, help being reminded of some noble river that has gathered its colours from the various soils through which it has passed, but has preserved its identity unimpaired, and gathered itself in one splendid volume before it breasts the eternal sea. But there is one effect of his retirement specially personal to myself, because it is I who have been forced, as it were, by a call which I could not honourably refuse, to stand in his place, and not merely in his place, but in the place of the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign affairs, to whose consummate Leadership of this House I was glad to hear a universal tribute paid this afternoon. The noble Marquess complained of the brevity of the recitals and narratives of Her Majesty's Gracious Speech. I gather that his notion of what a Queen's Speech should be is this: that it should contain a chronicle of all that has taken place of interest in foreign affairs, at any rate, since Parliament last met. On this occasion, by that test, I think that this Speech would fairly meet with a favourable judgment. It is only a week since Parliament separated, and if we had chosen to confine ourselves to the austere rule which the noble Marquess has laid down for the Speech we should indeed have had less to record than the meagre narrative of which he complains. I do not believe—and I am guided to some extent by my recollection of the Speeches that were presumably composed by the noble Marquess himself—that it is necessary on these occasions to put into the Gracious Speech from the Throne all the most material affairs which have taken place in the year and within the control of the Foreign Office. But as the noble Marquess has pointed out some omissions which he thinks are of importance I will endeavour, so far as my imperfect knowledge goes, to supply the deficiency. He misses any mention of Siam. The acute part of the Siamese crisis was over last August, and it hardly seemed worth while to resuscitate that transaction for the benefit of Parliament in the month of March, 1894. But as respects Siam, there is not very much to report. The negotiations for a Treaty between France and Siam came to a conclusion, and as soon as the Articles of that Convention have been executed by the Siamese Government we are assured

that the place of Chantaboon, which was occupied as a guarantee for the execution of those provisions, will be evacuated by the French Government. There is no provision of which I am aware in that Convention which remains unexecuted except the trial of the alleged murderer of Monsieur Groscurin. That trial is now in progress, and I do not doubt when it is concluded that the French Government will fulfil its engagements. Her Majesty's Government are fully aware of the responsibility imposed upon them by the fact that the commerce of Siam is almost entirely British, and we have taken due note of the assurances of the French Government, made not less to myself than to my predecessor in Office, that the boundary of French and English influence is divided by the Mekong River. Then the noble Marquess touched upon Matabeleland. Of Matabeleland I confess I do not know much more than the very ample reports which have been published in the daily Press. I do not know much more than that the campaign has been conducted with singular courage, singular skill, and singular success, and that the settlement of the territory so acquired is now in process of completion under the auspices of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Then the noble Marquess wanted to hear something about Egypt. I might almost say the same of Egypt—that there is not much more to report than has been duly narrated in the Papers. Perhaps, indeed, there is not so much. But, at any rate, this may be said: that Egypt is tranquil and is prosperous. Certain incidents which have occurred within the last 14 months have given us grave reason to doubt the permanence of the institutions which we have established in that country. They will no doubt need the vigilant supervision of this country for some time to come; but I am happy to say that peace reigns in Egypt, and that we have, so far as I know, no cause for anxiety in that country. Then there comes the last point to which the noble Marquess directed my attention, the question of Uganda. Here I cannot but say one word as to the irreparable loss that is associated with that region—I mean the death of Sir Gerald Portal. He had that singular combination of talent and chivalrous courage which make

some of our younger English diplomatists almost matchless agents for the prosecution of such work, and it was a heavy blow and a great discouragement when, at the termination of his arduous pilgrimage, he, without having orally communicated his views to us on the inquiry which he had prosecuted, returned to this country to die. That melancholy event must have in itself a delaying effect on the publication of our scheme with regard to Uganda. But I can promise the noble Marquess that in a very short time, when the Supplementary Vote comes to be asked for for the purposes of Uganda, a full exposition will be given of the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and that Papers will be laid on the Table in ample time to give an opportunity for discussion on the subject. The noble Marquess devoted some pungent remarks to the domestic legislation of Her Majesty's Government. He said that it embodied a well-known programme—I am not sure that it does so fully as he thinks—but that it embodied some well-known programme so completely that it was only necessary for us to put after our insufficient foreign narrative, and our allusion to the Estimates, the words "the domestic programme as per previous." But he also said that so long as we were in Office we seemed to think that there was room for believing that that programme would remain substantially unimpaired, because of our want of success in bringing it into legislation. No one knows better than the noble Marquess what has been the obstacle against which most of our legislation has been wrecked, and I confess I thought it showed a disregard of appearances on his part, if I may say so, when he threw this in our teeth, having himself been the main object and primary cause of why we have not passed more Bills. He also alluded with an air of humorous regret to the absence of shorter Parliaments from our scheme. As long as the House of Lords deals with our Bills as it has been dealing with them lately it is not shorter but much longer Parliaments that we require to carry our measures. As regards the particular item in question, it is no doubt an important one, but it is not so pressing as others that are mentioned in the Gracious Speech. I think we were of opinion that having set forth our legislative desires and ambitions in

the Speech of last year, it made it necessary to curb our exuberance to some extent this year, and to keep some *bonne bouche* for a new Session. The noble Marquess complains of the absence of the Bill for conferring additional powers on the London County Council. I can reassure him. I am quite sure that he wishes to see that creation of his Government fortified with every power that the Legislature can give it, and I am quite sure also that this House will second the anxious wish of the House of Commons in furnishing it with all the authority with which it can be provided. Though it is not mentioned in the Gracious Speech, that Bill will be introduced—I am not sure whether it will be introduced in the form of one Bill or of several Bills—but the noble Marquess may allay all his fears, for it will soon be presented to the other House of Parliament. The noble Marquess touched on the question of the Church Establishments in Wales and Scotland. I do not propose—and perhaps there may be some feeling of relief at the announcement—to follow my noble Friend the Mover of the Address, who is so much more conversant with the subject of the Church Establishment in Wales, nor do I even wish to deal with it on this occasion; because, as the noble Marquess has truly observed, I may have occasion later in the week, and in a more appropriate place, to deal with the case in Scotland. I do not put the cases of Wales and Scotland exactly on the same basis. The case of Wales is the demand of a country, so great as to be almost unanimous, for the removal of a branch of the Church of England, which is alien to it, and is, therefore, as we are advised, doing far more harm than good to the cause of religion. The case of Scotland, on the other hand, is a case of a creed substantially identical divided into two parts by a hard-and-fast line of Church Establishment and non-establishment. It is for that reason that I cannot put the question of Scotch disestablishment on precisely the same footing as Welsh disestablishment, and have so far curbed the patriotism with which the noble Marquess justly credits me as to advise Her Majesty to put it second on the list. Now we come to the point which, after the badinage of the noble Marquess's speech, lay evidently deep at the bottom of his heart and convictions—I mean the question of Ireland.

That is a question which we have no desire to shirk or to evade. We did not omit it from the Queen's Speech from any idea of that description. We omitted all mention of the Home Rule Bill because, unlike last year, it is not our intention to propose a Home Rule Bill in this Session of Parliament. The noble Marquess, with the innocence which pervaded his remarks on other subjects of legislation, said—"Why do you not propose a Home Rule Bill? Why do you not put the Irish peasants out of their pain? Why do you prolong this contest, so irksome to us and so distressing to them? Why not again employ this Session in passing a Home Rule Bill through the other House of Parliament?" I should have thought that the answer to that series of questions would have been sufficiently obvious to all who have the honour of sitting in this House. I should have thought it was sufficiently obvious that it was enough for the House of Commons in one Session of many months to have spent its whole time in passing an elaborate measure only to be met in this House with so cruel a reception. It does not appear to me to be the mere function of the House of Commons to prepare and pass Bills simply in order to furnish sport for the House of Lords. If that were our idea, I cannot conceive a better course to adopt than to accept the advice of the noble Marquess, and to begin at once with our Home Rule Bill; to postpone all legislation for England, Scotland, and Wales for one more year in order to have the pleasure of bringing it up again in the month of September to be rejected once more by a majority of 440 Members of your Lordships' House; and, I suppose, when that had ensued, at the beginning of the next Session the noble Marquess would urge the same reason for then adopting a similar course. There is another course we might adopt. The noble Marquess has not obscurely hinted at it. We might appeal to the country. My Lords, to that country we shall not be afraid to appeal when the time is ripe in our opinion. But I will give him one conclusive reason why we will not appeal to the country at his invitation. That reason is, that we will never concede the right to this hereditary House to enforce a Dissolution on the country. The noble Marquess spoke of the lapse of time that

it would require to bring into operation the only true remedy for Irish discontent, of which he, it appears, has the sole secret and copyright. He said they might take long, and I presume that while they were in operation it would be necessary for their due elaboration that we should keep a Conservative Government in Office. But, my Lords, I would venture to remind him that his most illustrious predecessor in Office, a Prime Minister on his own side of the House, made a speech once on that very subject—a most remarkable speech, which has some bearing on the question of time. It was Lord Beaconsfield's speech in the House of Commons delivered in February, 1844. He pointed out then what were the true causes of what he called the Irish Question, and he pointed out that the ills of Ireland were ills that in other countries would be remedied by a revolution, but that in this country it should be the task of Government by policy to remedy them. He pointed out that if you produced equality of creed, if you redressed the iniquities of Irish administration, in 50 years you would have a happy and contented Irish peasantry. My Lords, last month the 50 years expired, and I do not know, although the Conservative Party have had their due share of power during those 50 years, that we are so very much nearer the happiness and contentment which Mr. Disraeli predicted. If we have any signs of happiness and contentment in Ireland—and I am glad to say that in 18 months those signs have multiplied and increased—those signs of happiness and contentment are, in our opinion, not due to the light railways and other remedies that the noble Marquess adumbrated, but to the hope held out by the Liberal Party that the great boon of local self-government for purely local affairs, so far as it is consonant with the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, would not be long delayed. My Lords, the figures as regards agrarian crimes which have been supplied to me are so remarkable in themselves that I will trouble your Lordships with them. In 1893 there were, exclusive of threatening letters, 207 cases of agrarian crimes in Ireland, or, inclusive of threatening letters, 308 cases of agrarian crimes in that country. Now, the figures of 1893, under either head, are the lowest since 1878—15 years ago

—when the totals were, without threatening letters, 181 cases, or, with threatening letters, 301 cases of agrarian crime. I think, then, whether you do or do not attribute this decrease in crime to the same cause as we do, Her Majesty's Government have some ground to be contented with the present condition of Ireland, and have, at any rate a right, after being some 20 months in Office, to put it down to the policy they have pursued, and to the wise and just administration of Mr. John Morley. The noble Marquess made one remark on the subject of Irish Home Rule with which I confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament England, as the predominant Member of the partnership of the Three Kingdoms, will have to be convinced of its justice and equity. That may seem to be a considerable admission to make, because your Lordships will know that the majority of English Members of Parliament, elected from England proper, are hostile to this measure. But I believe that the conviction of England in regard to Home Rule depends on one point alone, and that is the conduct of Ireland herself. I believe that if we can go on showing this clean list of agrarian crime; if we can point to the continued harmony of Ireland with the great Liberal Party of this country; if we can go on giving proofs and pledges that Ireland is entitled to be granted that boon which she has never ceased to demand since the Act of Union was passed, I believe that the conversion of England will be of no slow or difficult character. My Lords, the question of Home Rule is one that I regard not from the point of view of Ireland only. It has for me a triple aspect. It has, in the first place, the aspect that I believe that Ireland will never be contented until this measure of Home Rule be granted to her; and that, though you may come in on other issues and succeed us who sit here, your policy of palliatives is bound to fail. In the second place, I believe that not merely have we in our Irish policy to satisfy those who live in the island of Ireland itself, encompassed, as Mr. Disraeli once said, by that melancholy ocean, we have not merely to satisfy the Irish race within Ireland itself, but, for the good of our Empire, and for the continuity and solidarity of our relations with our brethren across the

Atlantic, it is necessary that we should produce an Irish policy which shall satisfy the Irish people. And, lastly, I view it from the highest Imperial grounds, because I believe that the maintenance of this Empire depends, not on centralisation, but on decentralisation, and that if you once commence to tread this path, you will have to give satisfaction under the same conditions certainly to Scotland, and possibly to Wales, not in the same degree or possibly in the same fashion, but so as to relieve this groaning Imperial Parliament from the burden of legislation under which it labours. I will not detain you further on this subject, which has led me further than I wished. I did not mean to dilate so much on the question of Home Rule. The noble Marquess has, at any rate, the satisfaction of eliciting that declaration. I will only ask you, in conclusion, for that generosity which in this House, whatever its legislative and Constitutional defects may be, is the rule of political warfare. We stand before you a wretched remnant. As in the memorable charge at Balaclava, so here, we have enemies in front of us; and more moderate enemies, I trust, to the right of us; and, from what I have seen in recent Divisions, I am afraid that we have no very cordial friends to the left of us (motioning to the Episcopal Benches). But we stand before you in the confidence, not of our number here—sorely crippled as we are by the loss of our Leader, limited as we are in the number of our votes in this House—we stand before you, confident, not in our own strength, but in the firm belief that we have a large measure of support from the people of the Three Kingdoms.

Address agreed to, *nemine dissente*, and ordered to be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The EARL of MORLEY appointed, *nemine dissente*, to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for this Session.

COMMITTEE FOR PRIVILEGES—Appointed.

SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE JOURNALS—Appointed.

VOL. XXII. [FOURTH SERIES.]

STOPPAGES IN THE STREETS—Order to prevent, renewed.

APPEAL COMMITTEE—Appointed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*The Earl of Rosebery*.)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: What arrangement does the noble Earl propose with respect to the arduous labours this House has to undertake, especially at this season of the year?

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: My past week has been a somewhat crowded one, and I have not been able to give much attention to that most important topic; in fact, if I might make an honourable confession, it has only just dawned upon me. Could the noble Marquess make any suggestion?

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My impression is—and I appeal to the experience of the noble Earl opposite (Lord Kimberley)—that it is better that we should meet seldomer to do something than meet often to do little each time. It is certainly inconvenient to noble Lords to meet often with little or no business to transact, and I do not think our work is so well done. If I might, therefore, make a suggestion to the noble Earl, it would be that so long as Bills do not come before us we should not meet more than once a week, or something of that kind.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I think the best plan would be for your Lordships to meet at the usual hour tomorrow, and then to consider what arrangements we shall make as to the immediate future.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at half past Six o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 12th March 1894.

The House met at half after One of the clock.

C

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners :—

The House went ;—and, having returned,—

NEW WRITS.

For the Borough of Leeds (Western Division), *v.* The Right Hon. Herbert J. Gladstone, First Commissioner of Works.

Leith District of Burghs, *v.* Ronald Craufurd Munro-Ferguson, esquire, Commissioner of the Treasury.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That Mr. Roby have leave to seek a Conference with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining (under Standing Order 79) in which House of Parliament the respective Private Bills should be first considered, and to report the same to the House.—(*Sir John Mowbray.*)

ELECTIONS.

Ordered, That all Members who are returned for two or more places in any part of the United Kingdom do make their election for which of the places they will serve within one week after it shall appear that there is no question upon the Return for that place ; and if anything shall come in question touching the Return or Election of any Member, he is to withdraw during the time the matter is in debate ; and that all Members returned upon double Returns do withdraw till their Returns are determined.

Resolved, That no Peer of the Realm, except such Peers of Ireland as shall for the time being be actually elected, and shall not have declined to serve, for any county, city, or borough of Great Britain, hath any right to give his vote in the Election of any Member to serve in Parliament.

Resolved, That it is a high infringement of the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom for any Lord of Parliament, or other Peer or Prelate, not being a Peer of Ireland at the time elected, and not having declined to serve for any county, city, or borough of Great Britain, to concern himself in the Election of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament, except only any Peer of Ireland, at such Elections in Great Britain respectively where such Peer shall appear as a Candidate, or by himself, or any others, be proposed to be

elected ; or for any Lord Lieutenant or Governor of any county to avail himself of any authority derived from his Commission, to influence the Election of any Member to serve for the Commons in Parliament.

Resolved, That if it shall appear that any person hath been elected or returned a Member of this House, or endeavoured so to be, by Bribery, or any other corrupt practices, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against all such persons as shall have been wilfully concerned in such Bribery or other corrupt practices.

WITNESSES.

Resolved, That if it shall appear that any person hath been tampering with any Witness, in respect of his evidence to be given to this House, or any Committee thereof, or directly or indirectly hath endeavoured to deter or hinder any person from appearing or giving evidence, the same is declared to be a high crime and misdemeanour ; and this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender.

Resolved, That if it shall appear that any person hath given false evidence in any case before this House, or any Committee thereof, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender.

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Ordered, That the Commissioners of the Police of the Metropolis do take care that, during the Session of Parliament, the passages through the streets leading to this House be kept free and open, and that no obstruction be permitted to hinder the passage of Members to and from this House, and that no disorder be allowed in Westminster Hall, or in the passages leading to this House, during the sitting of Parliament, and that there be no annoyance therein or thereabouts ; and that the Serjeant-at-Arms attending this House do communicate this Order to the Commissioners aforesaid.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

Ordered, That the Votes and Proceedings of this House be printed, being first perused by Mr. Speaker ; and that he do appoint the printing thereof ; and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

PRIVILEGES.

Ordered, That a Committee of Privileges be appointed.

OUTLAWRIES BILL.

“For the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries,” read the first time ; to be read a second time.

JOURNAL.

Ordered, That the Journal of this House, from the end of the last Session to the end of the present Session, with an Index thereto, be printed.

Ordered, That 750 Copies of the said Journal and Index be printed by the appointment and under the direction of Sir Reginald Francis Douce Palgrave, K.C.B., the Clerk of this House.

Ordered, That the said Journal and Index be printed by such Person as shall be licensed by Mr. Speaker, and that no other Person do presume to print the same.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER reported Her Majesty's Speech [see page 1], and read it to the House.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MR. WARNER (Somerset, N.): I think all will agree that the Speech from the Throne gives pledges for the continuance of that Radical and progressive policy so dear to the Liberal Party, and for which the majority of this House has striven so hard and so unceasingly during the last Session under the leadership of the greatest of our countrymen. I cannot mention the name of the right hon. Member for Midlothian without condoling with the right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench who have lost so great a chief and one whose tact and unparalleled experience in Parliamentary matters it is impossible to equal. But we, his Party, feel his loss not only on account of the great eloquence with which the right hon. Gentleman thrilled this House, not only on account of the influence that he cast over us and the whole country with his master mind, but perhaps we shall feel more keenly the loss of one who had so much tenacity of purpose and such an unswerving fidelity to all the principles and great measures adopted by the Liberal Party, and the loss will also be felt deeply by many Members like myself, whose earliest recollections are connected with the kindness and geniality of the great statesman. There is a blank left by the retirement of our late Leader which no mortal man can ever fill. The Speech from the Throne is his policy. It is the programme that that great statesman enunciated as the Leader and mouthpiece of the Liberal Party at Newcastle, and the best tribute we as a Party can pay to him is to fight for the cause he supported, and to carry the banner which he upheld to victory in the future. While affection to our late Leader leads us in that direction,

our duties and pledges to our constituents urge us in the same way, and I greet with pleasure the first measure mentioned in the Queen's Speech, which will be the one, perhaps, that he would take the greatest interest in, because it affects that country for which he laboured so unceasingly, and for whose welfare he sacrificed so much of his life. I refer to the measure to deal with the sad case of the evicted tenants in Ireland. I greet it with pleasure, not only because in itself it embodies a great and good principle, but because I believe that it is the only measure that can maintain that satisfactory condition in Ireland which has been reached at the present moment until the great Home Rule Bill becomes law. [*Opposition laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite may laugh, and may rest their hopes on the desertion of the present Prime Minister from that cause, but I would recommend them to read the speech which Lord Rosebery made to his Party this afternoon. Before entering further into the legislation proposed in the programme, I must say a word or two on the able way in which the foreign affairs of the country have been conducted under the statesmen who have had the management of them. We have already overcome the difficulties connected with the Chinese frontier on the side of Burmah. We have gone far in our negotiations in a friendly way—and that alone is a great thing—with Russia as to the definition of our frontier in Central Asia; the United States are carrying out the mandates of the arbitrators with reference to the Behring's Sea fisheries, and I trust that in the delicate matter of the collision of our forces with those of a friendly nation in West Africa the same amount of success will attend the efforts of those who have these subjects to deal with. I regret to say there is a necessity for a large expenditure in providing for the defence of the Empire, but I may add that most of us on this side are prepared to support that expenditure. But to return to the legislation proposed to be undertaken this Session. Besides the measure affecting Ireland, there is a promise of most important Bills dealing with labour questions—with the Factory Acts, the Mines Regulation Acts, and with the provision of a Board of Conciliation for the settlement of labour disputes. I will

not detain the House by referring to these important measures affecting labour, because, although I take great interest in them, I am to be followed by one who has had a life's experience of the working classes, and whose study throughout his life has been labour questions. I regret, however, that the measure which was passed in this House during the last Session was not made law, and that there is not included in the programme a Bill restricting labour in mines to eight hours a day. Perhaps the measure most desired throughout the country is a Registration Bill—not a Registration Bill such as the Duke of Devonshire seems to think any Registration Bill must be, not a gerrymandering Bill, but a real, honest Registration Bill, which shall remove some of the grievances that now exist, even if it does not do more than put an end to the practice of disfranchising for two years a man who removes his home and deprive rate-compounding owners of property of the power of disfranchising their tenants. It will be hard for hon. Gentlemen opposite to refuse their support to a Bill which will give votes to the classes already enfranchised by getting rid of the difficulties which tend to keep the men off the Register. There is a measure perhaps more keenly desired throughout the country, but which I cannot hope to see gentlemen opposite join in supporting—a measure for preventing the mere fact of a man's holding property giving him extra votes. The Liberal Party are delighted to see that a man shall no longer be qualified by mere leisure and property for repeating the expression of his opinion at the ballot-boxes and so often overriding the wishes of the locality. But beyond these Bills there was a Bill for dealing with the liquor traffic. [*Ironical Opposition cheers.*] I am pleased to note that gentlemen opposite greet the mention of that measure with such pleasure, for I hope they will then support it. No Member of the House will be slow to support a Bill to give to Scotland that which has been got with such difficulty and labour for England—a Local Government Bill. Then there is the Bill for the disestablishment of the Scotch Church; and on this subject I should like to say that, although I live far removed from Scotland, I have always heard—and nobody seems to be able to

contradict it—that the only thing that keeps the great Churches in Scotland apart is the fact of there being an Establishment. I rejoice to see a measure for the equalisation of rates in London, not only because it is good for London, but because it carries out the best principles of the Poor Law of 1834, and does away with a remnant of an ancient abuse—putting the heaviest burden on those least able to bear it. The Speech also foreshadows a measure which I think will be greeted with joy by agriculturists throughout the country—a measure to divide rates between occupier and owner, which will at least give to those who are employed in agriculture a less share of the burdens that they now have to pay. Lastly, I must express satisfaction that among the first of the Government measures will be one for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales—a Church which has ceased to be a National Church, a Church which has no right to be called a National Institution, and which only remains to bring hatred on the Church of England, of which it is so decrepit and decayed a member. [*Opposition laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite may dissent from that statement, but it certainly is a fact that the majority of the Welsh people look upon it as a very unimportant and un-National Institution. The programme before us is one which, from a Radical point of view, is good, and if it is carried I am sure most of us will be satisfied. I quite recognise the great difficulties that the Government and the Party have before them. But I believe those difficulties are over-estimated. Gentlemen opposite may do something towards helping in this work. In view of the necessities of their Party at the elections which they expect so soon, and which they so ardently desire, they would do well to use their best abilities in trying to influence their friends elsewhere to counsels of moderation and forbearance. Beyond these difficulties there is the difficulty of having lost our Leader. Against that I put the fact that we have still an unbroken Party. We have still sitting on the Treasury Bench the most Radical Government that ever sat there. We have still two great Leaders who are quite able to cope with the difficulties before them. We have in this House one whose eloquence and faculties of

leadership have been evinced over and over again. While for our Leader in the country we have a brilliant statesman—a man tried in the highest office—a man who has successfully dealt with the most intricate and delicate negotiations—a man who is honoured and respected and admired by the working classes—a man also who has shown great capabilities of leadership in another assembly in this great Metropolis. With such men, with such a united front, and with such a cause, I not only feel that this House will accept the programme, but that when the time comes to consult the country the masses of the country will turn with scorn upon the false Radicals and the self-styled friends of the people who dare stand aside or oppose those measures of democracy and progress which we so heartily desire. I have to apologise to gentlemen opposite for having made, perhaps, too much of a Party speech. I can only give as an excuse the present anxiety of Parties and my inexperience in dealing with these subjects as anything but a Party man. I thank the House very much for the attention with which it has listened to me, and I beg to move this Address in reply to Her Majesty's Gracious Speech—

"That we, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."—*(Mr. Courtenay Warner.)*

*MR. C. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): In rising to second the Address of Thanks to Her Majesty for Her Most Gracious Speech, perhaps the House will permit me to express my appreciation of the very distinguished compliment and honour which the Government have conferred upon me in asking me to discharge this duty, in the performance of which I am sure, from my own past experience of the House, that I shall be granted its fullest and most complete indulgence. This, I believe I am correct in saying, is the first occasion on which an hon. Member occupying a humble position in life similar to that which I occupy has been called upon to discharge such a duty. I attach considerable importance to this

fact, not merely on account of the personal compliment which to me it involves—and that, Sir, is not without its interests and influence upon my mind—but more because of the principle which is involved in the incident itself. It is a guarantee, as I take it, that as far as this House is concerned equality of privilege and opportunity should no longer be limited by considerations of birth or social distinction, and, as such, I attach considerable importance to it. I think I may also be permitted to thank the Government for the compliment which they have paid to my class through me in asking me to discharge this duty. I hope also that I may regard the departure which the Government have made in this respect as a guarantee of their sympathy with progressive legislation. Reference has already been made to the sympathetic views of the Prime Minister (the Earl of Rosebery) on social and democratic questions. He has already given evidence elsewhere of his sympathy with the masses, and, with Lord Rosebery as Prime Minister, and with, as Leader of this House, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt), who for the past 20 years or more has been one of the truest and most faithful friends whom the industrial classes have been able to count upon in Parliament, I hope I may take this new departure as a guarantee that they are determined to maintain a progressive and democratic policy in social and domestic affairs, and can assure my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if that be so, he may confidently rely upon the cordial and loyal support of all his friends not only in this House but also in the country. It must, I think, be a matter of profound congratulation to learn from Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech that her relations with Foreign Powers continue to be of a cordial and friendly character. When we remember the vastness of her dominions, and take into account the diversity of the character and temperament of her subjects scattered here, there, and everywhere amongst the nations of the earth, and involving liabilities and responsibilities which may at any moment lead to serious complications and breaches of the peace, we cannot but express our profound congratulations to Her

Majesty that her relations with Foreign Powers continue to be amicable and satisfactory. Many people seem to think that working men take no interest in foreign policy or foreign affairs. That is a very great delusion. They take the keenest and the most watchful interest in these things, but I may be permitted to say on their behalf that they are not particularly in love with what is sometimes termed a "Jingo" policy. "Defence, not defiance" is the policy which they approve, and the Government may rely upon this—that if there were any attempt to resort to what has been termed a spirited foreign policy, they must calculate at the outset upon the most strenuous and most uncompromising opposition from the industrial classes in the country. This, however, is, I think, a contingency most remote. With regard to domestic affairs, it is also some satisfaction to us to know that by the administration of the ordinary law in Ireland agrarian crime has been reduced to the lowest point which has been reached within the last 15 years. That, in my judgment, is conclusive evidence of the wisdom of the policy which has been pursued by Her Majesty's Government in relation to Ireland. It is a demonstration, in my opinion, that a policy based upon considerations of clemency, justice, and impartiality will rarely, if ever, require to be strengthened and supported by repressive legislation in order to secure the maintenance of law and order. I think that in the comparatively tranquil and peaceful condition of Ireland is to be found the strongest possible justification of the policy of the Government in regard to that country. The measure promised in Her Majesty's Speech dealing with the case of the evicted tenants in Ireland is one which, I hope, will receive the sympathetic consideration of all Parties in the House. It is to be hoped that a reasonable settlement will be arrived at on this vexed and perplexing question, and that such settlement may prove an additional guarantee for the future peace and tranquillity of that unfortunate country. The question of registration will also command our attention during the Session. That is a matter of great and urgent necessity. There is no class in the community which suffers more on

account of the anomalies of our present Registration Laws than the industrial class. They, as a rule, are a migratory class. The precariousness and uncertainty of their employment compels them to change from time to time their place of residence, and such change of residence not infrequently results in long periods of disfranchisement, and loss of political rights. I maintain that that is a condition of things which ought not to continue. The system of plural voting which obtains often leads to a majority of the residents in a constituency being overruled by those whose only interest in the district is derived from the revenue which they gain from their investments in it. That ought not to be considered sufficient to give a man additional rights and privileges. I agree with the sentiment uttered by my hon. Friend, to the effect that wealth and social position ought not to carry with it additional political advantages. I will mention to the House an incident that has occurred in my own history since I became a Member of this House. Five years ago I was compelled to remove from my place of residence to another house which offered greater facilities for the effective discharge of my duty to my constituents and as a citizen, but in doing so I suffered this great disability—that I was disfranchised as a Parliamentary voter for a period of 17 months. While I had the honour of being permitted to take part here in the making of the laws which were to be observed by myself and by my countrymen, yet if an election had occurred in the constituency in which I was residing during those 17 months I should not have been permitted to vote for the candidate of my choice. That is a ridiculously absurd and anomalous condition of things which ought not to continue. I therefore rejoice that we have promise in the Queen's Speech of a measure of reform of our Registration Law which will carry with it at the same time the principle of "One Man One Vote." Measures are also promised relating to Ecclesiastical Establishments in Wales and Scotland. On these questions I will not do more than to add that it seems to me these measures are dictated or demanded not merely as a matter of justice to Nonconformists, but as essential to true Christian progress; and I am sure of this—that they are

anxiously looked for by the great majority of Welsh and Scotch people. Measures are promised for the equalisation of rates in London, for the extension of local government in Scotland, and on the question of local control of the liquor traffic. These are matters of importance to London, to Scotland, and to the people of the entire Kingdom. The measure for the local control of the liquor traffic is one in which my constituents take a very deep and profound interest, and we are very grateful indeed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for having courageously taken up this question, and I sincerely hope that he may be able to make satisfactory progress with it during the present Session. I am afraid I have troubled the House at too great length; but if it will bear with me but for a few minutes longer, I will say a word or two on the last paragraph in Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech—the one which deals with labour questions, in which I am very deeply and closely interested. And here, Sir, I should be wanting in frankness if I did not express my regret at the omission of any reference in the Speech to the Employers' Liability Bill. That is the question which agitating the mind of the working classes at the present time perhaps to a greater degree than any other question. I could not help feeling, having regard to the way in which this measure was dealt with in the last Session of Parliament, that we were about to commit a similar mistake in our treatment of labour questions which was made in relation to the question of Ireland in 1891 years. The Representatives of the Irish people in this House—the men who were in the closest touch and sympathy with their race—stood up in the House and besought the House to do certain things and not to do other things on which it was bent. They were like men crying in the wilderness. You turned a deaf ear to their appeals, notwithstanding how sincerely they were made. The result was that they were the most disastrous of history, a matter therefore, need not be repeated by me on this occasion. I am very likely, from what took place last Session in relation to the Employers' Liability Bill, to commit a similar error or take in our treatment of labour questions. I do not claim exceptional right to speak in these matters. I claim, with my colleagues, to be closely associated with large Organisations of working men. I claim on their behalf, and on my own, to speak in their name, to voice their opinions in this House; and I regret to say that last Session, although one and all of the 14 Labour Representatives here who are closely connected with Labour Organisations appealed to you to pass the Employers' Liability Bill, our appeal was rejected. [*Opposition cries of "No!"*] Yes; you turned a deaf ear to it. [*"No, no!"*] I beg pardon of hon. Gentlemen who say so. The result clearly shows that you turned a deaf ear to our cry. [*Cries of "No, no!"*] You and your friends in another place. You mutilated and destroyed the Bill; and for what? For Party purposes. [*"No, no!"*] Why, what is it we are told now by some of the leading men of the Unionist Party? We are told that if a Unionist Government be returned to power at the next Election they will consider it their duty to place in the forefront of their programme an amendment of the Employers' Liability Bill. [*Opposition cheers.*] I am glad to hear you cheer that, but it would have been better if you had waited until I had finished my sentence. We are told that they will consider it their duty to introduce an Employers' Liability Bill at least as good — [*Cheers, and cries of "A great deal better!"*] —no, not better, but at least as good as that of last Session. I challenge the right hon. Gentleman for West Birmingham when I say "not better." A declaration such as this may do for Party purposes in the country, but, to my mind, it is anything but an evidence of high-minded statesmanship. Well, the measure having been lost in the last Session it now devolves upon us—and we accept the duty—to give unmistakable evidence to the country and to the House of Lords that neither they nor the Party opposite shall ever be permitted to carry a measure to amend the Employers' Liability Bill through this House which embodies as one of its provisions a contracting-out clause. As I have said, I regret the omission of all allusion to this Bill in the Queen's Speech. I am certain of this—from the able, vigorous, and courageous way in which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary

defended this measure in all its stages last Session—that there is no attempt to withdraw from the position which the Government then took up in relation to this matter. We prefer to wait until we can carry a measure without a contracting-out clause rather than pass one in the mutilated form in which hon. Gentlemen opposit^{ly} endeavoured to force it upon us last Session. The measures which are promised for the promotion of conciliation in labour disputes, for the amendment of the Factory and Mines Acts, and for the reform of the procedure of inquiry into fatal accidents in Scotland, are all measures of wide and deep interest to the industrial classes. They all tend in the direction of promoting the safety and well-being of those who toil in our factories, our workshops, and mines. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary very wisely—if he will permit me to say so—a few months ago appointed a Committee of Experts to inquire into the conditions of labour under which men—and women also—are compelled to work in our chemical and alkali works. The Report of that Committee shows to what an alarming extent many of these operatives suffer in consequence of the noxious gases which they inhale in the discharge of their duties in the chemical and alkali works, and I hope that the measure which he is about to introduce will receive careful consideration from the House, and that we shall endeavour with all possible speed to carry it to a successful issue. Social questions at the present moment are occupying the mind of politicians and all political Parties. In that circumstance I see a very hopeful sign of the times. The social ferment and agitation which we are compelled to witness from day to day is but the outcome of a higher intelligence amongst the people. It is the necessary corollary and logical outcome of an extended franchise, and is based upon an honourable ambition on the part of the toilers to surround themselves and their families with more healthy and comfortable conditions of life. As such, it seems to me it must be fostered and encouraged by us. If this House is wise it will give a sympathetic consideration to the cry of the working classes, and do all in its power to mitigate the hardships to which they are at times subject. I am not a revolutionist in

this sense: I do not advocate extreme measures; I am opposed to all violent methods of procedure in endeavouring to obtain social reform. In my judgment, he is not a friend of the working man who gives such cowardly and foolish advice. But, at the same time, we must take warning by what has taken place in the Sister Isle. Wise and timely concessions will do much to calm the temper and the passions of the toiling masses, and will do much to promote the peace and goodwill amongst the people of this Empire. It is because I believe the measures which are foreshadowed in the Speech of Her Most Gracious Majesty will tend in this direction that I have the greatest possible pleasure in seconding the Address of Thanks.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, &c."—[See page 41.]

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am sure the House will have heard with great satisfaction the manner in which the two hon. Gentlemen who have just sat down have discharged a task which, for my own part, I have always thought one of exceptional difficulty and delicacy. Neither of the two hon. Gentlemen is a stranger to us. Both, I am glad to think, have on previous occasions taken part in the Debates of this House, and the House has listened to both, and especially to the manly utterances of the hon. Gentleman who seconded the Address, with marked satisfaction on many previous occasions. I feel, as the House will readily understand, but little disposed to critic even to the smallest extent, though I may say that perhaps parts of the speech of the hon. Gentleman who moved the Address was couched in terms slightly controversial than has been usual on such occasions. I listened with great interest but some surprise to a passage in the speech of each of the hon. Gentlemen which seemed to me rather more appropriate to an Amendment on the Address, for I noticed that the Member who moved the Address expressed great regret that the Eight Hours Bill was not included among the measures mentioned in the Speech—a Bill which I may say the Seconder has a rooted objection to; while the Seconder, so it seemed to me, devoted not the least interesting and im-

pressive part of his most able speech to a discussion of the general policy which ought to animate the House and the Party to which he belongs with reference to a measure which has not made its appearance in the Speech from the Throne. But the hon. Gentleman will well understand that I do not wish to press these small details, and I am sure I only express the general view of the House when I thank them for the speeches they have delivered. Now, Sir, the hon. Gentleman who moved the Address I think only met the just expectations of Members when he alluded in very feeling terms to the great change which has taken place in the constitution of the Government—a change, I regret to say, necessarily reflected in the general proceedings of this House. I do not suppose that any such change has taken place in the *personnel* of this House, or any such loss been incurred to the general distinction and brilliancy of our proceedings as that which the Government opposite, and we, in our measure, must deplore—namely, the retirement of the late Prime Minister from the responsible post which he has so long and so brilliantly filled with so much distinction. For my own part, I can hardly imagine the House of Commons deprived of the services of that right hon. Gentleman who has so long occupied the very front rank on one side or the other among those who lead in our Debates. Long before, or before many of us who have now entered middle life were even born, the right hon. Gentleman was a Cabinet Minister, and already the centre of many hopes and many prophecies of success which have since been most brilliantly fulfilled. I believe the number of gentlemen who were in the House before I joined it is now a comparatively small and dwindling band; but before that date the right hon. Gentleman had been Prime Minister of England for four years. He has been, within the memory of every single individual whom I am now addressing, ever since they entered the House, the great example of all that is most splendid and most brilliant in the conduct of Parliamentary debate and in the use of every species of Parliamentary eloquence; and, leaving all questions of Party politics on one side, deferring or, rather, putting out

of view any attempt to estimate the great public career, of which the most active part, I should imagine, has now drawn to a close, I feel that every Member of this House owes to the late Prime Minister a debt of personal and public gratitude in that he has maintained, through all the great Parliamentary and social changes, the high standard of public life which he learned to admire in a different age, and that he has continued to uphold the great traditions of the House of Commons, with which, I believe, no small part of the dignity and the utility of this Assembly is inseparably bound up. I pass from this subject to what is more directly germane to the present occasion—namely, the contents of the Speech from the Throne, in answer to which we are now asked to vote the Address. The Mover of the Address appeared, I thought, at one part of his speech to feel some anxiety lest we should be under a misapprehension that with the change which has recently taken place was involved some alteration of the policy of that Party of which the hon. Gentleman is a Member. I do not think any such suspicion has ever crossed the mind of any of us who sit on this side of the House. There has, undoubtedly, been a change in the name of the firm, but the business is conducted as usual. Even before we had the advantage of hearing the Speech from the Throne we never for a moment conceived that the retirement of the late Prime Minister would carry with it consequences affecting the general policy of the Party which has been so long led by him. But if any such suspicion had ever occurred to any gentleman they would certainly be entirely dissipated by the character of the Speech from the Throne. That Speech is a reflection—I will not say a detailed reflection or repetition, but in the main a repetition—of the Speech of last year; and such changes as there are in it have their natural explanation in the changed circumstances of the present Session. The first part of the Speech, which deals with foreign and colonial matters, need not long detain us. This part appears to me, I will confess, more remarkable for what it does not say than for what it does say—for the omission of topics to which I should have anticipated some allusion would have been made, topics

which are important, and which, I think, should have been dealt with by those who framed the Queen's Speech. The Government, in framing the Speech, have had very clearly in mind the existence of Europe, America, and Central Asia, but I notice with surprise that there is not the slightest reference to Eastern Asia or to any portion of Africa. Both Eastern Asia and Africa have been the scenes of very remarkable and interesting events upon which we have some right to desire information, and to which we fully expected that some reference would be made in the Queen's Speech. In South Africa a war—not a war on a very great scale, not an important war, but nevertheless a war—has been carried through, and, I am glad to say, conducted to a successful issue. We should have liked to know something about the settlement, something about the arrangements which the Colonial Office proposes in regard to Matabeleland. East Africa presents a problem of even greater difficulty and intricacy. If I remember rightly, no less than two Commissions of Inquiry have been issued by the Government into the affairs of East Africa—one in connection with the railway and one in connection with the expedition of that eminent public servant who was so soon called away from the service of his country; and in the case of neither of the Reports of these Commissioners, so far as I am aware, have we the slightest intimation of what their contents are, or what course the Government means to pursue in regard to them. We have been promised Papers; the promise has not been fulfilled. We are at this moment absolutely in the dark as to what view the Government take in regard to Uganda; what steps they mean to take to preserve the dominion and supremacy of the British flag and power in that district; and, in general terms, what their policy there is. Rumours have reached us, but I do not attach much value to them, that even the Cabinet themselves have never been able to come to an agreement upon the subject. Very likely that is not the fact; but if they have come to any agreement on the matter, let them tell us what it is, and let them inform us not only what they mean to do, but why they mean to do it, and what is the basis of facts upon which they mean to found their policy in

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that country for the future. But if the silence about East Africa is singular, surely the silence about Siam is still more singular. I think the Government will not think I am making an undue claim when I say that the Opposition have been anxiously careful not to embarrass the Government during the course of negotiations, the delicacy of which we fully recognise. But I understand that these negotiations are now at an end, and that no question is pending between France and Siam except a comparatively trifling question concerning the trial of certain persons. In these circumstances, I am not aware of any sufficient reason why Papers should be further delayed. We have been given to understand that the delay which has occurred in settling the boundaries of the buffer State in the Upper Mekong has been due to climatic reasons which make it impossible for the Boundary Commissioners to make their investigations until later in the year. This, however, is a comparatively subsidiary question; the centre of the whole problem, so far as this country is concerned, depends not so much upon the buffer State on the North-East of Siam as upon the position which Siam itself is to occupy between the French and British dominions. The French, as I understand, have declared explicitly that they have no interests hostile to the independence of Siam. I hail that declaration with satisfaction, and I wish to know whether the Government entertain any hope of carrying out any arrangement by which France and England should mutually agree to protect the rights of Siam, and to constitute it a really efficient buffer State between two Powers, which, of all Powers in the world, ought specially to avoid all unnecessary causes of friction and disagreement. On these subjects I trust the right hon. Gentleman, when he comes to reply, will give us, if not full information, at all events the hope and prospect of full information being soon forthcoming. My next duty is to do what probably none of my predecessors in the post which I am now filling have ever had occasion to do—namely, to comment on the paragraph which deals with the Estimates. Hitherto that paragraph has been regarded as one of the commonplaces of Speeches from the Throne. The old

form of the sentence ran somewhat in this way—

"The Estimates for the Public Service of the year will be laid before you, and they will be prepared with all due regard to economy."

I observe that on this occasion the reference to economy has slipped out, and that the expression "provision for the defence of the Empire" has come in. I hail it with unqualified satisfaction as a recognition of that which we impressed upon the Government in November or December last—a fact which they then appeared to have learned very imperfectly—namely, that there was an immediate necessity for increased naval expenditure, and I gather that they have learned the lesson which we endeavoured to teach them with great success. I say this in no controversial spirit. The Government are, I hope, prepared to carry out the policy which we recommended to them, and we trust that when the Naval Estimates are laid before us all anxieties may be laid at rest, and that the Government realise that their primary duty is to see that the Fleets of this country shall be raised to that level of strength below which our national honour and even our national safety can be but imperfectly preserved. I now come to the part of the Speech which deals with internal affairs. The first paragraph of this section of the Speech says—

"The recent improvement in the state of Ireland has been continuous and marked, and agrarian crime has been reduced under the administration of the ordinary law to the lowest point which has been reached for the last 15 years."

As the House knows, I have no very profound belief in statistics, unless they are supplemented and confirmed by other sources of information. Undoubtedly, however, the information which reaches me from Ireland leads me to believe that her present condition in regard to agrarian crime has not been presented in too rosy a light by the Irish Secretary, and that the condition of Ireland in reality is such as all of us must view with the utmost satisfaction. So far there is no controversy between us, but I confess that I see in the words "ordinary law," which occur in this paragraph, something in the nature of a challenge to gentlemen who sit upon this side of the House. I never had the slightest objection to taking up challenges, and I am quite

ready to take up this one. If the implication of that paragraph has been rightly comprehended, the Irish Secretary, who, I suppose, is responsible for the wording of it, would have us believe that the condition of Ireland is due, firstly, to the law being enforced, and, secondly, to the fact that the law so enforced was the ordinary law. I am not sure that I quite agree with either of these points. The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that among the complicated factors which control the condition of Ireland the administration of the law is only one. The Chief Secretary has had at his back an advantage which none of his predecessors have had. He has had at his back a powerful Party and organisation who have used their whole strength and influence and all the resources at their command to make the task of the right hon. Gentleman an easy one, and to diminish as far as possible the condition of agrarian disturbance, out of which agrarian crime arises. Well, that has nothing to do with the administration of the ordinary law. It is a political accident; or rather it is the result of political design, which is not necessarily of a permanent character. We have, in fact, no right to believe, either from the history of Ireland in the past or from the declarations of Irishmen in the present, that there will be a continuation of this happy state of things. I believe that one distinguished Member of the Irish Party who support the Chief Secretary has declared that in a certain contingency there will be an agrarian agitation of such a character and magnitude as to throw in the shade all previous agitations; and an agrarian agitation of that kind, should it succeed, as to which I may express a passing doubt, must have the result of greatly increasing the amount of agrarian crime with which the Government have to deal. Then the Government have had the great advantage of a most prosperous and plentiful harvest. I will not dwell upon that; the advantages of it are well-known to everybody who, like the right hon. Gentleman, is responsible for the government of Ireland. No farmer anxious to avoid bankruptcy has ever studied the weather with more anxious care than I did when I occupied the Chief Secretary's position, or than he does himself, I am sure. But the right hon. Gentle-

man appears to lay down the proposition that he has not only reduced crime under the ordinary law, but that it is because he has used the ordinary law that crime has been reduced. That is not a proposition which will hold water for a moment. The difference between the Criminal Law of Ireland as I desire to see it, and as the right hon. Gentleman maintains it, may be said to depend upon two points alone—secret inquiry and change of venue. The right hon. Gentleman was glad enough to exercise the power of secret inquiry under the Explosives Act when he could do it. He only objects to its use in connection with crimes which are really not less dastardly and dangerous to the community than those associated with dynamite. I want to remind the right hon. Gentleman that the change of venue is an improvement in the machinery of the law which he actually enjoys during those months of the year when he can try crimes at the Winter Assizes, and we have to consider not how justice is performed at the Winter Assizes, where there is a natural or spontaneous change of venue, but how justice is executed when crime is tried at the ordinary Assizes, where no change of venue is possible. I hope we shall hear whether there is some special reason now why justice in agrarian cases is likely to be done by an ordinary jury in the district where a crime has been committed. I have never been able to follow the right hon. Gentleman's practice as regards the Winter Assizes, or to see why he tries some cases there and some at the ordinary Assizes. For instance, I have never been able to understand why he tried the case of three gentlemen, Members of this House, not at the Winter Assizes, where, if they had been guilty, they might have been convicted, but at the Spring Assizes, where, whether guilty or not, it was quite certain they would be acquitted. I recollect that when it was my unhappy lot also to have to prosecute Members of Parliament the doctrine then laid down by gentlemen opposed to me was that it was really an outrage upon the Representatives of the people. When I had to prosecute Members of Parliament, we did, I confess, attempt to bring them before a tribunal which would find them guilty if the evidence went against them; but the right hon. Gentleman has taken

care that a Member of Parliament when tried shall be acquitted. I must say that the "ordinary law," as thus administered, does not appear to me to be a better machinery for obtaining justice than the law with change of venue, Special Jury, and secret inquiry, which I should like to see established in Ireland. I pass from that to the paragraphs in the Queen's Speech which deal with legislation. The first of these paragraphs touches upon a measure which is intended to restore, as I understand it, the evicted tenants to their holdings. The phrasing of the Speech is as follows:—

"The condition, however, of a considerable body of evicted tenants in that country requires early attention, and a measure will be submitted to you with a view to a reasonable settlement of a question deeply affecting the well-being of Ireland."

We have now reached the year 1894, and I think it was in the year 1892 that the Chief Secretary, in a letter to a friend of mine, a Member of this House, told us that in this matter of evicted tenants he meant business. The least you can do when you meant business in 1892 is to put your measure in the Queen's Speech of 1894, and I am sure the right hon. Gentleman has only fulfilled general expectation when he gave this measure a prominent place—I may say the most prominent place—in the Speech from the Throne. Sir, I shall reserve, naturally, any comments upon the proposals to be submitted to us until we see them in their definite form; but I will express a hope that the word "reasonable" before "settlement," in the paragraph in the Queen's Speech relating to evicted tenants, is not a mere otiose epithet; but that the settlement will be an actual settlement, dealing with the real question at issue. I ought to warn the Government that, so far as I am at present advised, I still think our original scheme, embodied in the Act of 1891, which smoothed away the technical difficulties that might have prevented an arrangement between landlord and tenant, was a wise one. I think if the Government are going to ask us to vote public money, which, even in the present flourishing state of the public finances, is probably not over plentiful; if they are going to ask us to vote public money for the purpose of rewarding those who have admittedly

been used as instruments of a political plan of campaign—money which might have been devoted for the benefit of tenants who are certainly not less deserving, and who have endeavoured to the best of their ability to carry out their legal engagements, and have never been the slaves or instruments of any organisation whatever—then I think we shall look at the proposals of the Government with a very critical suspicion. I should think it a very serious menace to the future tranquillity of Ireland if we were to allow the people in that country to imbibe the lesson that as often as they thought desirable to get up a land agitation for their own purposes we were to see them out of the mess in which they had got, and especially do I think that lesson ill-timed and fraught with peril to the future when I know we are at this moment threatened by leading politicians in Ireland with a renewal of that very agitation in consequence of which these men have been turned out of their farms. I do not mean to argue as to a proposal I have not got before me, but I thought it only fair to the Government to let them know the spirit—assuredly not a hostile spirit—in which I view this very difficult question of the evicted tenants in Ireland. It will not be necessary for me to say anything about the paragraph which deals with registration and plural voting; but I have always observed that when the Party opposite get into any difficulty in reference to their substantial measures for the benefit of the community, they immediately set themselves to work to manipulate the machinery by which Members are returned to this House. I think there is very apt to be a great waste of time in looking so much at the machinery, and in mending it, when the machinery itself is never allowed to do anything. If you are to deal with this question, you ought, at any rate, to deal with it impartially, and not deal with one anomaly and leave another untouched. You should endeavour to make this House a faithful reflex of public opinion with regard to every class and country, and until you do that we shall not be convinced that the Party opposite approach this question in the spirit of reformers, and not in the spirit of gentlemen with an anxious eye to the next Election. There are only three other measures, two of them in the

Queen's Speech, to which I shall refer. They all, though different, have something in common. They all threaten, while unsettling, great interests. The first is the Local Veto Bill, the second the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and the third the Scotch Disestablishment Bill. I have been favoured during the last few weeks with two or three letters a day, accompanied by resolutions, couched in precisely identical terms, passed by meetings that have been called to congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the promise he appears to have given that the Local Veto Bill should be the most prominent Bill of the Session. I have no recollection of seeing the promise myself, but I gather that the right hon. Gentleman has given rise to a widespread expectation of that kind. I gather that from the resolutions of the Temperance Party, which is a highly organised body, seeing that it has expressed its views so spontaneously in such identical language. I hope the Government will either do it or drop it. It is not fair upon the threatened interests that this sword of Damocles should be kept hanging over their heads. I think a somewhat similar criticism may be passed upon the measures dealing with the Welsh and Scotch Church Establishments. These are great historical Institutions, whose history is rooted in our past, and they are no mere survivals of the past, but are at this moment living, vital organisations, powerful for good. Why are you to hamper their efforts by keeping them in doubt Session after Session? It is not fair to them; it is not just, and I can assure the Government that the way in which they are treating the Church of Scotland at this moment is one which will be resented by the people of that country. The Mover and Seconder of the Address appear to think that the people of Scotland are only anxious to be disburdened of their Church. I take a very different view. I am not going to say who is right or who is wrong; I am not going to argue for or against Disestablishment, or to discuss the merits of the question; but I say that this is not a Bill which should be stuck away in the last paragraph of the Queen's Speech among the ruck of other measures which you do not mean to pass—which you only mean to use as an

advertisement, and which, while they are so used, disturb these great organisations and hamper their efforts. I might use a similar criticism in regard to a measure that is not mentioned in the Queen's Speech. The Mover of the Address was very anxious to free the present Prime Minister from the imputation that he was a luke-warm adherent of Home Rule. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that his labours in that respect were entirely unnecessary. Nobody doubts for a moment that the present Prime Minister is a zealous adherent of Home Rule. I believe there are some who have seized upon some ill-considered phrase used by Lord Rosebery with reference to the late Bill, and have founded upon that some conjectural edifice as to what his views were. We do not conduct public life in this country in that manner. Lord Rosebery joined the present Government in 1892 as a Government formed on the basis of Home Rule, which had Home Rule for its central point, and a precise point dividing Parties in this House. Lord Rosebery is well acquainted with the traditions of political life in this country, and is a Scotch gentleman of the highest honour, and that Lord Rosebery, when in 1892 he joined the Home Rule Administration, cherished any secret doubts on the subject is a thing which there are none of his friends or of his political opponents who will not agree in repudiating. We admit fully that in this and in other respects no change of policy is to be anticipated from the change of *personnel* in the Government. I, for one, should be the last to suggest that any cooling in the zeal of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite for Home Rule was likely to occur in consequence of the great change which has recently taken place in their ranks. But that is not the point to which I wish to call the attention of the House. The point is this: Is it fair by Ireland, still more is it fair by England and Scotland, that this question should still be hung up? Last year it was brought forward, discussed, and rejected. How long do you mean to allow that rejection to pass unmodified by a decision one way or the other by the country? I indulge in no prophecy as to what the verdict of the country will be. I know too little about the springs which animate the political machine to

express a confident opinion, and I have seen too many prophets shamed in their prophecies to venture myself to join their ranks. But whatever the result might be of an election really called to decide upon this question of Home Rule, I say it would be better than the present condition of suspense. Think what you are doing in Ireland; think what you are doing in England and in Scotland. In Ireland from day to day no man knows, except so far as he himself may make a forecast of the political future, whether he is to be ruled by an Imperial Parliament or by an Irish Parliament; he knows not whether the Land Laws are to be settled within these walls or whether they are to be handed over to gentlemen who sit below the Gangway. Indecision and doubt must necessarily be cast over every transaction in land, and, indeed, in the tenure of any property whatever; and is it fair to Ireland, is it fair to a country, which of all countries in the world has suffered from want of security, that we should deliberately perpetuate this want of security by our own wanton action? If it is injurious to Ireland I maintain that it is not less injurious to England and to Scotland. It is not a good thing that the electors of this country should have perpetually hanging over them a question connected, not with social legislation in regard to which the hon. Gentleman who seconded the Address made such an eloquent appeal—an appeal to which every heart on both sides of the House should be responsive—and that their attention should be deliberately withdrawn from those questions by the course you have taken, and should be turned to Constitutional issues which, whether they be fraught with all the harm we anticipate, must, at any rate, be barren of good for the great mass of the community of this country. I would earnestly press upon the Government that, if they feel that from want of Parliamentary time, or from some inherent weakness in their own ranks, or because they doubt that they have behind them that force of public opinion which is absolutely required to carry through a measure of this kind, whether for these reasons or any other, they are not strong enough to bring this question to a satisfactory conclusion in this Parliament on their own terms, their duty to Ireland, to Scotland, and to

England alike calls upon them to put an end to this period of unrest and suspense, and to give once and for all to the people of this country upon a clear, definite, and precise issue the power of saying whether they will or will not carry out the schemes which were laid before them and discussed in the course of the last Parliament.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): Mr. Deputy Speaker,—After a life of over 25 years spent in the House of Commons, I have had so much experience of its generous instincts that I am sure that, standing here to-night upon this occasion, I shall not appeal in vain to its indulgence. I am well assured that at this moment there is but one thought that fills every mind and every heart in this House. To miss from amongst our proceedings to-night that noble and famous figure which, longer than the memory, I think, of any man now listening to me can extend, has been the chiefest ornament and the most prevailing power in the House of Commons, is a sad and a solemn reflection. At such a time I know that all eyes are “idly bent on him who follows next.” We feel, I am sure, all of us, without distinction of Party, that the glory of this House has suffered the greatest diminution it could have endured. We recognise that we have lost from among us a great source of life and of light, which illuminated and exalted our proceedings above the level of ordinary men. I know that what I can only call this “dark eclipse” is viewed with regret by all who sit in every part of this House, and that no man will refuse to that great Member of Parliament whom we have lost a tribute of admiration and of respect. For us who sit upon this side of the House, to whom he was the glorious and venerated Chief of a devoted Party, our feelings I can only describe as those of distress akin to dismay. For myself, and for my colleagues, I can hardly trust myself to speak of one who was to us the kindest and most constant friend. It is not for one who, with unequal steps, follows in the path that he has trodden to attempt to estimate the place which he occupied in this House, or that which he will occupy in the history of this country. The place that he occupied in this House it is superfluous as it would be impos-

sible, for me to attempt to estimate. It is unnecessary; for you yourselves, whom I have the honour to address, have seen, and heard, and felt, far better than any words can paint, what the late Prime Minister was to this House of Commons. We shall never again see anything which is *simile aut secundum*. If I may borrow a fine phrase of his own, we are painfully conscious of the fate that awaits those who, with unequal hand, attempt to guide the chariot of the sun. We cannot furnish forth that inexhaustible knowledge, that mature experience, those unfailing resources, that splendid eloquence, that fire which kindled passion and which roused enthusiasm, which prevailed as much by sympathy as by reason. But, at least this, I think, I may be permitted to say—that we may take as our great example what the right hon. Gentleman opposite, in his generous passing recognition of this great statesman, has dealt, and properly dealt, with as one of the greatest features of that great character—I speak of that dignified demeanour towards his opponents as well as his supporters, that stately and old-world courtesy, diversified at times by the pleasant humour we so well recollect, which in the midst of the fiercest struggles of Party raised the tone and maintained the reputation of the House of Commons, and has left us a most perfect model of what is due to this Assembly from those who have the responsibility of guiding its actions. As Mr. Gladstone—permit me to use the name—occupied during his long and honoured life the first place in the House of Commons, so, I think, will his memory remain for ever amongst its greatest traditions. And now, Sir, we have to turn to the ordinary business of the time, and I must make some remarks on what the right hon. Gentleman has said. He said that there was no change of policy on the part of the present Government. Well, Sir, that was a perfectly accurate statement, and it did not require the acuteness and perception of the right hon. Gentleman, I think, to make that assumption. There is no change of policy. There is a change, it is true, in men, which we deeply deplore. We desire to carry on the same policy on the same principles as those which animated this Party under its late Leader. The right hon. Gentleman says we have repeated

the Speech of last year. Yes, Sir, we have repeated the Speech of last year, because the Speech of last year contained the policy of the Party, and will continue to contain it until we have achieved the objects we contemplate, and it depends very much upon the right hon. Gentleman—if he will permit me to say so—to shorten the number of topics in that Speech by allowing us to carry some of them into law. Therefore, in the matter of repetition, I must hold him and his friends largely responsible. I am extremely anxious to-night to introduce as few controversial topics as I can. The right hon. Gentleman in his comments said there was nothing in the Speech about Africa; but that was not perfectly accurate. There is a paragraph in the Speech referring to some unhappy incidents which took place in West Africa, which we hope will reach a satisfactory settlement. Then the right hon. Gentleman says that there is no statement with reference to Uganda. That is perfectly true. The lamented death of the late Sir Gerald Portal, a man of great promise, who, the country had a right to expect, would distinguish himself in the future as in the past, has prevented us from arriving as soon as we had expected at a final decision on that subject. The right hon. Gentleman said he had heard rumours of disagreements in the Cabinet in regard to that matter. Well, Sir, there are many rumours. The right hon. Gentleman surely has had sufficient experience of rumours of disagreements in the Cabinet to know not to put too much faith in them. I am happy to assure him that there has been no disagreement in the Cabinet upon that subject. We recognise our duty, and we are willing and ready to announce it as soon as we are able to do so, but we are not in a position to announce it to-night. Then, as regards Siam, I would rather leave that matter in the experienced and capable hands of the Under Secretary than attempt to expound at second-hand a very delicate matter of negotiation. The right hon. Gentleman, dealing with the paragraph relating to the Estimates, commented upon the absence of the word "economy." I have commented upon the absence of that word for a great many years. I had no notion that the right hon. Gentleman was so advanced in

age as to remember the time when economy was mentioned in the Queen's Speech.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Oh, yes, all the years of the late Government.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think the noble Lord is mistaken, but I will not dispute the point with him now. At all events, the facts do not correspond with it, and certainly it is a very long time since the House of Commons has attempted any feats of economy. I hope the right hon. Gentleman may hold out some prospect of reform in that respect. I confess I see little chance of it. The right hon. Gentleman used a phrase which I think he afterwards modified—that he had taught us a lesson on the subject of the Navy. I venture to reject that. He has taught us no lesson at all. We have always held, and hold as strongly as any other Party, that the supremacy of the British Navy should be maintained. We held that language last November, and the Returns which have been published prove the accuracy of our statement, that the supremacy of the British Navy at this moment is unquestioned and unquestionable. We are prepared to take such measures as shall maintain that condition of the British Navy in the future. That is a statement which we made last November, and which, I believe, will be justified by the Estimates that will be laid before the House. The right hon. Gentleman then turned to a topic which I may call peculiarly his own—I mean the social and criminal condition of the Irish people. That is a matter in which he takes a strong personal interest, and on which, therefore, he is entitled to speak. He does not deny that the condition of Ireland is good—far better than it has been at former times—but he questions the causes of the improvement. He says my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has peculiar advantages. Yes, Sir, he has peculiar advantages, because he enjoys to a greater degree the confidence of the Irish people. That is the only thing which is likely to improve the condition of Ireland. If you have a Government or a Governor who enjoys the confidence of the people you will find the condition of its social and criminal statistics far better than you are likely to find them under a system of

coercion. I am not going into this question of Ireland, but the condition of Ireland may, I believe, be shortly stated in a single sentence. The condition of Ireland under the law of coercion was a condition of disturbance; under a Government of conciliation it has been a condition of comparative tranquillity and peace. That is better, I think, than all speculation upon Winter or Summer Assizes. That is a satisfactory account of why the condition of Ireland is very different now from what it was under the previous Administration. I am unwilling to detain the House at great length, and I am not going to discuss the Bills which are mentioned in the Queen's Speech, as if I did I should raise collateral issues which I do not desire to do now. But the right hon. Gentleman in his comments on the Bills mentioned in the Queen's Speech adopted a very singular line of argument. He said—"Is this Bill going to be the first Bill? If it is not, you mean to drop it." And so he goes on with each Bill in succession—the Local Veto Bill, the Home Rule Bill, and the Disestablishment Bill. He says that because they do not stand first we do not intend to pass them, and we have no sincere desire to carry them into law. What is our experience of attempting to carry these Bills into law? We put them forward; we intend to carry them; but whether we do so or not depends on the manner in which they are treated first in the House of Commons and then in the House of Lords. If you have a system of protracted discussion so as to consume the whole time of the House of Commons in a manner that, whereas an ordinary Session could fairly deal with three or four of these Bills, you intend to spend the whole time on a single Bill so as to shut out all the rest, by what right do you come to us and say—"When you put these Bills in the Queen's Speech you do not intend to pass them." That is taking advantage, as the lawyers say, of your own wrong. It is you who, first of all in this House and another Assembly in another place, who take care as far as they can to prevent the progress of these measures. I repudiate altogether that statement of the right hon. Gentleman. I say that these are measures to which we are sin-

cerely attached and which we are sincerely determined to push to an issue, and if we do not carry them this year we will carry them next, and if not next, then the year after that. You ask us when we are going to appeal to the country. I will tell you: When we have placed before the country the whole plan and scheme of the Liberal Party. When we have placed the country in a position to judge what has been the course of either Party in the House of Commons with reference to this plan, and what has been the conduct of the House of Lords with regard to it. That is the time when we mean to go to the country, and that is the issue we intend to put before it. When this Parliament was elected, this Government came into Office upon a distinct statement of the whole plan, beginning with Home Rule, going on to Disestablishment, and including the Local Veto Bill and the other Bills which are enumerated in the Speech from the Throne. That was what we placed before the country. You denounced it, but the country pronounced in our favour and against you. It is the mandate of this Parliament to carry that plan and that scheme into execution. When the House of Commons rejects these schemes, then, of course, you will be justified in condemning us, and if the country joins you, then you will succeed; but as long as we have the support of the majority of this House of Commons for the plan which was laid before the country at the last Election, and approved by a popular majority, we shall proceed continuously with that plan, in good report and evil report, and we shall use every means at our disposal to promote those measures and to carry them through this House. What may be done with them in another place is not our concern. The responsibility for that conduct will be ultimately judged of by the country. Our task is a plain, a direct, and a simple one—to proceed as far and as well as we can with the measures to which we have pledged ourselves. The right hon. Gentleman says—"How unfair it is to Ireland that you should hang up Home Rule." Ah! Sir, Home Rule hung up has been a far better thing than coercion enacted. What has improved the condition of Ireland? What has led to that better feeling which the right hon. Gen-

tleman admits to exist? It is the faith and the hope which exists in the breasts of the Irish people that the great Liberal Party is true to their faith and will adhere to their pledges, and that they will do all that in them lies to give effect to that policy of self-government to Ireland which is the great legacy our great Leader has left to us. You talk of Ireland being injured by Home Rule being hung up. No doubt, I believe, Ireland would have been benefited if Home Rule had passed, but the hope and the belief that Home Rule is coming—

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford): When?

SIR W. HARCOURT: That, Sir, does not depend upon me alone. The hon. Member who asked me that question can himself, if he chooses, very much aid in that decision. If he will help us we will help him. We have done much to help him and his friends, and I think we have some right to expect that they, in their turn, will help us. The right hon. Gentleman, I am sure, does not seriously mean to impute to us any insincerity of purpose. He may believe that we shall not succeed; I am sure he will do his best to ensure our failure. That I do not doubt. Of that I do not complain; but do not let him charge us with having brought in those measures without a sincere and an honest desire to promote them to the best of our ability. I am sorry for having for a moment gone into more or less controversial topics. Before I sit down there is one matter of business which in my position I ought to bring before the House. This Debate, which has been so well opened by my hon. Friend the Mover of the Address in his excellent speech, and by my hon. Friend the Seconder, who made a speech which I am quite sure found an echo in the hearts and in the admiration of hon. Members in all parts of the House, is one which I am bound to tell the House—the House, of course, being masters of the situation—we have very little time to prolong. I will just state the bare figures of the time which is at our disposal. It is curious enough that very similar circumstances to those in which we find ourselves occurred in the year 1868, when Lord Derby resigned on March 5, and Mr. Disraeli succeeded him as Prime Minister. On March 31 the financial business of the House must be

completed; and on that occasion when the new Government came in every facility was given to it for passing the financial business. I observe that at that time the Navy Estimates were taken on March 20 without discussion—time, of course, being provided afterwards for their full and adequate consideration. The Navy Estimates were at that time taken without a statement. We do not propose to do exactly that—I only allude to the fact in order that hon. Members may see what measures the House of Commons took at that time under circumstances of pressure. What we must do before March 31 is this: There are the Votes in Supply—15 Civil Service and Supplementary Votes—the Army Votes, men and pay, and the Navy Votes, men and pay. There is the Vote on Account—Civil Services and Revenue Departments. Then the Ways and Means Bill must be passed by a certain time, and the Royal Assent must be given and the signature of Her Majesty obtained. The only way—and I lay this before the House, because it is entirely for the House to deal with the matter—we have to suggest is to call upon the House to keep on to-day with the Queen's Speech, and we hope that the House will be disposed to conclude the Debate upon it to-morrow. On Wednesday we shall have to ask for the whole time of the House up to Easter. I am sure that the House will not, under the circumstances, refuse that demand.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Up to Easter or up to March 31?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not know the distinction—March 31. Then we propose to take the Army Votes on Friday, and to give Monday and Tuesday—

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): What will be taken on Thursday?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Supplementary Votes. On Friday we propose to take the Army Votes, and on Monday the Navy Votes—to move the Speaker out of the Chair—and on Tuesday, to take the Navy Votes for men and pay—of course, providing that an opportunity shall be given afterwards to discuss questions which may arise on those matters. It is necessary to get these Votes in order to get the Ways and Means Bill through. On Wednes-

day we should have the Report of Supply, and the Ways and Means Bill would be introduced. Now, I can make what I think under the circumstances hon. Members will admit is an agreeable announcement to the greater number of them. It is that if the Ways and Means Bill is taken, as it usually is taken—and there is no reason to think that there will be a departure now from that course—as a consent Bill, then the attendance of a great part of the House will not be necessary in all the stages of the Ways and Means Bill. It will, of course, fall upon us to keep a quorum for passing the Ways and Means Bill, but the greater part of the House will be released from attendance. The Ways and Means Bill would be introduced on Wednesday, and then, I suppose, most of the House might be released. On Thursday it would be read a second time, and on Saturday we must have the Bill in Committee. On the Monday it would be read a third time in the House of Commons—that is Easter Monday; then it must go to receive the Queen's signature at Florence. [*Cries of "The House of Lords!"*] Oh, yes. At all events, they have not yet thrown out our Money Bills. I dare say that may come in time; but they have not yet begun to do that, although, with a little practice, they may do so. The Bill will pass through all its stages in the Lords on Monday, the 26th. Then it is proposed to obtain the Royal Assent on Thursday, the 29th. That is the course which the Government have to suggest, if the House are willing to agree to these arrangements, or to something corresponding to them. We shall, of course, take no contentious business of any kind between Wednesday, the 21st, and Thursday, the 29th. Between these dates the greater part of the House would be relieved from attendance while the financial business was going on. It has been suggested to me that there are matters which it might be desired to discuss in the time that is left. Among these is the subject of Indian finance, and there are other subjects for which I will endeavour to find time early after Easter. I will also endeavour to reserve a day for the discussion of the question of Uganda. I only throw out these matters for the consideration of the House, and I am not endeavouring to

bind them to anything. But I would like the House to consider these matters that we may proceed with the least inconvenience to all parties.

MR. HANBURY: What of the Vote on Account?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not know what day can be taken for the Vote on Account, but I will mention the matter again. I thank the House for the indulgence they have extended to me in allowing me to make this statement.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): To clear up the matter I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether I am right in understanding the position of the Government to be this—that they will take no controversial business of any kind other than Supply before Easter or before the 29th March? Will the Government take care when we are away during those days of Easter week that no Private Bill legislation shall be submitted, and that, in fact, the House will only meet for the formal business of passing the necessary stages of the Ways and Means Bill? Further, will the right hon. Gentleman pledge himself to find time for discussing those questions which legitimately arise upon the Estimates or upon the Queen's Speech some time after Easter, in consequence of our having to give up the time before Easter which is necessary to carry through the financial business of the House? When I say no controversial business I include the First Readings of the Government Bills, which have always been made the occasion more or less of important debate.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I wish also to interpose a question. I understood the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that he hoped the House would shorten discussion owing to the stress in which the Government are placed, and that in return the Government would take care that Members were granted time for fuller discussion which might be required on those Votes—I do not mean the Supplementary Estimates, but the great Votes. Do I rightly understand that?

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is so.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Then will the right hon. Gentleman kindly say what opportunities the Government will afford for further discussion?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I cannot state the exact date. I cannot accept exactly the very large and roving commission of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, that all controversial questions must not be raised, because I cannot tell what those questions are. I said that certainly, as regarded the Navy, we should take the earliest opportunity of making the statement. On the former occasion in 1868, when the Vote for the Navy was taken on the 21st of March, the statement on the Estimates was not made until the 11th of May. I do not contemplate anything of that kind, but I think the Navy Estimates ought to be taken on the earliest possible day. I said, also, I desired to arrange for a discussion with reference to Uganda. Then, with regard to Indian finance, I have already mentioned that that is a subject which it is very proper should be considered at an early date. I cannot specify the particular date, but I desire that the earliest opportunity should be given for its discussion.

Mr. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said that, as he made an interjection in the course of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, perhaps it was right and due to him and to the House that he should briefly state why he so interrupted the right hon. Gentleman. He must confess that, for his part, he thought the Leader of the Opposition had given to the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of speaking frankly and clearly upon this question of Home Rule for Ireland, and of stating what position it would occupy in the future legislation of the Party. He thought the reply of the right hon. Gentleman was disappointing in the extreme, and he thought it was all the more disappointing because of the hopes that had been raised by certain other speeches and declarations which they had heard had been delivered in another place that day. They were told there was no change in the attitude of the Liberal Party towards Home Rule; but in the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the hanging up of Home Rule had been better for Ireland than when Home Rule was agitated, he noticed a very distinct change in the policy of the right hon. Gentleman who sat on the Treasury Bench. Perhaps it was best that hon. Members opposite, no matter how safe

they might themselves feel as to the policy of the Liberal Party, should know the truth as a section of the Irish people saw these facts. What were they taught during all the days of the right hon. Gentleman whose loss to this House Irish Members of all shades of opinion, he thought, would join in deploring? No matter whether he was in opposition or at the head of a Government, the Irish Members always felt that there was in Mr. Gladstone a sympathy for Ireland, a sympathy with those suffering from oppression wherever they were found, in whatever country in the world it might be. It was a remarkable thing that while Mr. Gladstone led the Liberal Party he always declared that the question of Home Rule was urgent, that it overshadowed all other questions, that it blocked the way, and that it was by the removal of the Irish question from this position that the co-operation of the Irish Members would be obtained towards the settlement of those questions for which the right hon. Gentleman asked their assistance. He thought the right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Harcourt), for his own Party and especially for Ireland, would be undertaking a very dangerous experiment if he were to continue in the belief that, because Ireland was peaceful while she was expecting Home Rule during the past years, the state of peace would continue in Ireland if the policy of hanging up Home Rule to the end of their programme of legislation was to be persisted in by the right hon. Gentleman and those who were responsible with him in the government of the country. They had heard a great deal of the peaceful condition of the people of Ireland. What he was amazed at was that the declaration of the improved condition of Ireland was not followed up by the fulfilment of one of the earliest pledges given by the Liberal Party—that the moment they succeeded to the Government of the country they would reverse the policy of their predecessors. The very first act the present Chief Secretary for Ireland said to which the Party would direct their attention would be the repeal of the Coercion Act. The Coercion Act might be in abeyance, but the position of the Irish Members and of the Irish people was this—that the Act, which was used as an instrument against one class

in Ireland, still existed in that country, and was still there for any political Party to take up. Was the Liberal Party going to go on in this form, and to leave the Irish people, who had hoped so much and believed in them, who had worked and made sacrifices in their cause, when the day of trouble came to the Liberal Party, to the tender mercies of those who passed the Coercion Act and worked it so unsparingly? It was a mistake to attribute to them a desire to free the hands of the Government unduly. They had made no demand that Home Rule should be in the programme of the Liberal Party for the present Session. But he gathered from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he held out no hope of a renewal of Home Rule, no hope that Home Rule was to be again introduced into this House until the fight between the two Houses upon every item of their legislative programme had been fought out.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I must have expressed myself very badly if I conveyed anything of the kind. I was speaking exclusively of the present Session, and I think the hon. Member must surely have misunderstood me.

MR. T. HARRINGTON said, he was sorry to say that the right hon. Gentleman's interruption scarcely carried him a bit further; but, even now, from him or from anybody on the Treasury Bench who would follow him in the course of that evening, they would be perfectly prepared and extremely glad to accept a declaration that if Home Rule was not to be introduced in the present Session of Parliament when was it to be introduced? That was the point of his interruption, and the important question. They did not ask that it should be introduced now—this year—but they asked when it was to be introduced. If they continued to delude the people of Ireland with the hope, and set their Representatives to work with them in loyal union with regard to English measures, and deferred the realisation of their hopes until they had passed all their English measures, he would tell them that, so far from cementing an union of hearts between Ireland and the Liberal Government, they would be creating in Ireland more bitterness and opposition and more

hatred of their Party than was ever felt before.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he desired to understand from the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether any statement was to be made on the introduction of the Evicted Tenants Bill. He thought it was highly desirable on a Bill of this character, of which they knew so little, there should be some statement on the introduction of the Bill, so as to let them know what were, at all events, the salient facts of the question. He also desired information on another point. Towards the close of the last Session the Chief Secretary was good enough to promise to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Acts. This was a matter, as the Chief Secretary knew, which was attracting a great deal of attention in every part of the country and in which the Irish tenants were very much interested. He should be glad to know if the right hon. Gentleman would give them some information as to when he proposed to nominate that Committee. The early weeks of the Session were always golden weeks for work of this kind, and he hoped the Chief Secretary would allow nothing to interfere with the nomination of the Committee.

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) said, he heard with great pleasure the large number of Bills which were announced in the Queen's Speech, but what he was rather concerned to know was whether the Government contemplated any reform of the procedure of the House which would give them reasonable expectations that these Bills might be carried through all the stages in this House? The Chancellor of the Exchequer would remember that the reason why many measures were not carried through in the past Session was owing partly to the action of another place and partly to the action of this Assembly—owing to the enormous amount of time which was taken up on the Committee stage of several Bills. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would bear that in mind, and that he would see that it was not an unwise or an unreasonable suggestion that the Committee stage of all Bills, or at all events of the majority of Bills, should be remitted to a Grand Committee, leaving this House free to

deal with the Second Reading and Report stage of the various Bills.

Mr. S. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince) said, he deeply regretted to intrude in the discussion, but he thought it would be a surprise to the House that there was no reference at all in Her Majesty's Speech to a very important measure affecting the hours of labour. He did not think there was any question upon which the attention of the working classes and of Members of that House was more centred than on the question of the hours of labour. It would be remembered that in the month of May last they carried the Second Reading of the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill by a majority of 79, and there was a very strong feeling of regret and disappointment that this measure was not at all referred to, either directly or indirectly, in the Speech from the Throne. He thought the Leader of the House ought to give some assurance to that large section of men that he and some of his colleagues represented as to the action the Government intended to take with regard to this Bill. Three weeks or a month ago this question was under the consideration of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and they unanimously resolved that, if this matter was not referred to in the Queen's Speech, either he or some other supporter of the Bill should move an Amendment to the Speech. He should be very sorry to have to take that course, but he could not see what other remedy they had at their disposal if they did not get some assurance from the Government that they would deal with the question and give them an undertaking that this measure, at all events, should be passed into law. The miners were very determined about the Bill, and he hoped they would hear that the Government would take it over and pass it into law this Session.

CONDITION OF TRADE AND AGRICULTURE.

*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, he rose to move an Amendment to the Address in reply to the Gracious Speech from the Throne. It would be remembered that at the commencement of last Session he handed in an Amendment to the Address, but he gave way in order to facilitate a discussion upon the woeful condition of

agriculture, and he contented himself with seconding a somewhat similar Motion made by the hon. Member for South West Ham. They divided the House and carried into the Lobby with them the greater portion of the Members on this side of the House; and considering that the condition of the country had gone from bad to worse, and that the state of employment had become increasingly worse than it was then, it could not fail to have struck every Member with the utmost astonishment that the Government should have put into the mouth of the Sovereign no reference whatever to the state of trade and agriculture, no expression of sympathy with the want of employment, and no measure foreshadowed which might amend that state of affairs. Representing as he did an industrial constituency, he could not allow this opportunity to pass of calling attention to the state of affairs in the industrial districts, and of asking the Government why they had omitted any reference to this condition of things in the Gracious Speech from the Throne, and of expressing astonishment that the hon. Member for Wansbeck, who held an official position in the Trades Union Congress, in seconding the Address, made no reference whatever to the lamentable condition of employment in the country, he consented to second an Address in answer to a Speech which was so conspicuously silent upon the industrial question. The Amendment which he proposed to move was as follows:—

"That this House desires humbly to represent to Your Majesty that the depressed condition of trade and agriculture, the reduction in wages, the number of artisans and labourers out of employment, and the continued immigration of pauper aliens to augment the labour competition, call for the immediate attention of Parliament."

Whatever the merits or demerits of the measures that the Government told them they intended to propose, it was absolutely certain that not one of them, or all of them together, would provide work and wages for one single individual in this country who was at present out of employment. One was at a loss to know the cause of such an omission from Her Majesty's Speech. It must arise from one of two reasons—either the Government were absolutely indifferent to the state of industrial affairs or they were

Mr. R. T. Reid

ignorant of the present condition of the country. There was no Member of the House who was off the Treasury Bench who did not know the great suffering there had been during the past 18 months, and it would be necessary for him very briefly to set the condition of affairs before the Government in order that they might hear from their lips whether they had any remedy to propose in order to remove such a condition of things. He would not do this by any abstract theories of his own, but he would do so from official publications, and more especially those issued by the Board of Trade, or else he would call such an impartial authority on trade matters as *The Economist*. In a recent issue of *The Economist*, in a review of the state of commercial affairs in the year 1893, these expressions were used—

"Industrial activity and enterprise has shrunk in almost every direction. The output from the shipbuilding yards fell off by 273,000 tons from 1892, and by 50 per cent. in steam tonnage and 41 per cent. in total tonnage from 1889. The exports of British and Irish produce and manufactures fell off by £8,500,000 compared to 1892, by £29,000,000 compared to 1891, and by no less than £45,000,000 compared to 1890. Yarns and textiles lost £3,400,000; metal exports, £2,100,000 between 1893 and 1892; and of the £18,000,000 decline in imports nearly £11,000,000 was in reduced purchase of raw material for manufacture. The shipments of bar iron, hoops, and wire were 205,000 tons less than 10 years before—namely, in 1883; 200 tin-plate mills were stopped for want of orders, and compared to 1891 there was a reduced shipment of 69,000 tons of tin-plate, and a drop of 5s. 6d. in the prices obtained."

But bad as this record was it would be infinitely worse if there were any statistics available from which they could gauge the state of the home trade. The authority from which he quoted just now stated—

"That it must be doubted whether our home trade is as well sustained as our foreign trade, and there are unfortunately no statistics which furnish the measure of the value of our internal trade. But this we do know, that 1893 proved infinitely worse to the farmers over a greater part of England than any of the disastrous years preceding it."

They all knew the suffering which had been caused by the coal strike, and which was caused by the necessity in which coalowners found themselves of reducing the 40 per cent. increase in wages given in the years 1887 and 1888. They knew also that the applications for new capital had

never been so small as they were in 1893 since 1876, and that they were no less than £129,000,000 sterling behind the applications of 1889. He held in his hands the last issue of *The Labour Gazette*, and he certainly thought that if hon. Members would read that journal they would speedily arrive at an exact understanding of the serious condition of affairs in many industrial centres. *The Labour Gazette* speaks of—

"The iron and steel trades being exceptionally depressed in South Wales, of cutlers being very short of work from various causes mainly connected with foreign trade,"

and says that 1,507 Trade Unionist branches in engineering, building, printing, bookbinding, furnishing, and wood-making, with a membership of 190,000, describe trade in January last as "dull to very bad." The result of this condition of affairs had been that month after month in 1893 from 10 to 7 per cent. of the Trade Unionists making Returns to the Labour Department were unemployed, and at the end of January last there were 246,803 Trade Unionists, mostly heads of families, unemployed, out of the total of 353,000, or 7 per cent. of the whole, against 1.5 per cent. in the winter of 1889-90, and 28 trades out of 37 were still returned as bad. But if those were the figures regarding Trades Unionists how infinitely worse must be the condition of those who were not members of Trades Unions, but who were ranked among the unskilled members of the industrial population! They could only arrive at the figures as regarded want of employment among unskilled labourers indirectly, and they were driven, in the dearth of statistics at the Board of Trade or elsewhere concerning home industries, to the Returns of pauperism. No less than 342,680 persons were relieved from the Poor Rates in one day in the middle of January last in certain selected districts of England and Wales—districts selected not by himself, but by the Local Government Board. In Central London no less than 475 per 10,000 of the population were paupers, and in all London and West Ham on one day in the second week of January there were 120,000, less eight. In December, 1893, the number of persons relieved was larger than in any year since 1872, and larger than any year between 1857 and 1865. On the

same day in January, 1894, in other districts of England, no less than 164,000 persons were official paupers, beside 33,000 in Scotland and 25,000 in Ireland; and of the 1,043 persons who applied in the course of the month for employment at the Labour Bureaux at Chelsea, Battersea, and St. Pancras work could only be possibly found by 256. It was absolutely necessary for one to give the facts and reasons for proposing such an Amendment to the Address, and it was astonishing that the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the President of the Board of Trade, and the President of the Local Government Board, if they had had the slightest knowledge of the condition of things being recorded by their several Departments, could have joined in a Queen's Speech which expressed no word of sympathy with such a state of things, which held out no hope whatever of alleviative measures, and which gave not the smallest indication that Parliament intended to devote one single moment of time this Session to the depressed condition of either trade or agriculture. Great injury was likely to be done to the cause of the unemployed by violent speeches; but the best remedy for disaffection, and for that popular ferment of which there were too many signs at the present day, was surely the full and adequate employment of the people at fair and reasonable wages. Relief works might be suggested, but it was not those works that people wanted. Relief works and works undertaken by Public Bodies were at best but temporary, make-shift, extravagant, and pauperising expedients, doing quite as much harm to the people as they did good. They only touched, as the Lord Mayor of London said in a recent letter—

"The fringe of an infinitesimal portion of the tremendous problem of the unemployed."

The remedy to be effective must go far deeper. It must go at once to the root of the whole matter—to the root of the causes which enabled their foreign competitors to gain on them daily more and more in the home as in the neutral markets. It was no part of his duty as a private Member to propose a remedy. He brought this matter before the House as representing an industrial constituency grievously suffering under the present state of affairs, and it was the primary

duty of the right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury Bench, associated with the President of the Board of Trade, to provide for the welfare and the employment of the people. The absorption of the time of the House of Commons by measures not dealing with this matter could only aggravate the evil instead of doing good. He admitted that it was difficult to find a remedy, but still gentlemen on the Treasury Bench, in their individual and collective wisdom, ought to be able to find a remedy for the condition of things which existed in the country at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thetford (Mr. J. Lowther) had devoted much time to the study of the question of the immigration of pauper aliens and to searching for a remedy for the present condition of affairs. Nor did the right hon. Gentleman stand alone in this. A Select Committee sat in 1888 and 1889 and made some strong recommendations pointing to the necessity of legislation in the future to cope with the evil. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, speaking to a deputation of unemployed working men on the 4th December, said the time had come when something must be done. He (Colonel Howard Vincent) submitted to the Government and the House that the time for legislation contemplated by the Select Committee had more than arrived, and that it was the bounden duty of the Government to devote special attention to the subject. Nor was he alone in this view. The noble Earl who now held the position of Prime Minister—and whom he ventured to say every Englishman, not only in that House, but throughout the Empire, was glad to see in that position—said on the 14th November, 1893, at the Royal Colonial Institute—

"If a labouring class predominates in a particular State, and can only see in the influx of emigration a lowering of its own wages and of its own means of comfort, you cannot greatly blame them if they oppose that immigration. They see their own homes more comfortable by keeping competition out, and therefore they are determined to do so. If there is one certainty in the world it is this—that with the growth of emigration and with the continual closing of the confines of States to the destitute emigrants of other countries, there is no country in the world that will not be compelled to consider its position, and possibly reconsider its position, with regard to pauper immigration unless it wishes permanently to degrade the status and condition of its own working classes."

Colonel Howard Vincent

Was it the wish of Her Majesty's Government

"to degrade the status and condition of its own working classes?"

He did not suggest it for a single moment, but with the words of the Prime Minister before him he asked how could they have composed the Speech from the Throne without suggesting a remedy for the state of affairs described as tending "to degrade the status and condition" of the working classes of the country? When their own working men were by the hundred without means of earning an honest livelihood, it seemed to him nothing less than criminal to make their situation worse by allowing over 33,000 aliens to come in mainly for sojourn in the single year 1893. Had the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade examined into the Returns in regard to aliens recently laid on the Table? If so, he would have noticed that over 5,000 came in in November, December, and January, representing a considerable increase over the number for the corresponding period of last year. Why should they continue to receive these pauper aliens when the distress of their own people was so great? Charity began at home; and when in England and Wales at the end of last November they found 726,951 paupers—or 66,000 more than at the same date in 1891—it was time they looked to reducing the number of their own paupers instead of augmenting them from the Continent. It was not difficult to find a remedy. The Member for West Birmingham had stated that the great cure was to find new markets, and there would be few who would disagree with him. What had the Government done to find new markets for the industries of this country? Was there any reference to this subject in the Speech? Was there a single word indicating where the manufacturers of this country, shut out increasingly as they were from foreign States, could possibly find those markets which were even denied them at home? Was there one word in Her Majesty's Speech relating to Siam or Uganda, or indicating in the smallest degree that Her Majesty's Government were alive to the permanent necessity of finding new markets to replace those markets which were closed to our great manufacturing industries? Opportunity was not lack-

ing. Canada, Australia, and South Africa had formulated a distinct invitation to Her Majesty's Government. The Dominion of Canada had twice spoken by its Legislature its loyal feeling to the Mother Country, and resisted all overtures from the United States to enter into a commercial union. A high commercial authority, speaking of Canada, said—

"The Dominion is becoming as time passes a more valuable customer, and it is true in our case that trade follows the flag."

It rested wholly with Her Majesty's Government and with the House to bring about a better state of affairs. The Canadian Parliament had declared its readiness, if the Government should free their hands, to put lighter duties upon British goods than upon foreign goods. At this very moment Ministerial Representatives of Australia were in London laying before the Government distinct propositions, not to say entreaties, to take measures to develop Imperial trade and to increase the output of British goods in colonial markets. He asked Her Majesty's Government whether these gentlemen were to be sent back to their colonies with mere empty compliments? Was the Government going to do nothing for our colonial trade, or to facilitate that Imperial commerce wherein lay the best remedy for the present depression? It was not a question of Canada and Australia alone. It was perfectly well known that the Cape Government was well disposed towards this question, and Mr. Rhodes himself was even more anxious than anybody else perhaps to do something to increase British trade with the object of holding the Empire together. The other day the President of the Board of Trade of Toronto pointed out the great advantage which the imposition of such a tariff as he had mentioned would afford to the colonies and also to the manufacturers of Great Britain. He (Colonel Howard Vincent) earnestly asked the House to give attention to this industrial matter, which lay at the very root of the social happiness and the commercial prosperity of the country. He moved this Amendment in no Party spirit whatever, and he trusted that he had said nothing which could be interpreted as being of a Party character. He earnestly hoped the Government would show their sympathy with the

subject by accepting the Amendment. If he were compelled to divide the House he hoped for the support of every hon. Member, whether English, Welsh, Scotch, or Irish, who had the welfare of the industrial population at heart. It was quite impossible for any Member to go about among his constituents, whether in town or country, without being struck with the enormous amount of distress and want of employment that existed, and he hoped that some portion of the time of this Session might be devoted to the consideration of the industrial position of the country, and to the framing of measures calculated to give encouragement to those who were at present without employment, to bring food to homes where no food was to be found now save at the cost of the public rates, and to enable all persons in the country to earn an honest and decent livelihood.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.), in seconding the Amendment, said, he had peculiar means of making himself acquainted with the question of the importation of pauper aliens, because the docks at Tilbury were in his constituency. A year ago one line alone deposited something like 180 a week of these pauper foreigners at Tilbury Docks. Of course, they did not stop at Tilbury; they came up to London, where they drove down wages and swamped the labour market. Something like 180,000 of these individuals were landed in England every year. Eighty thousand of them were supposed to be *en route* to America, but practically nothing like that number went to America, and it was found in the East End of London that the worse class of these foreigners remained in England, whilst the better class went to America. This sort of thing was not allowed in any other civilised country in the world. No other country would allow pauper foreigners to be dumped upon its shores. In America two Acts had been passed, the Aliens Immigration Act and the Aliens Contract Act, which absolutely prohibited the landing of pauper foreigners. A similar state of the law prevailed in Hamburg, in Canada, and in our Australian Colonies. He could not understand why the Government should not do something in the same direction. The present Government always had a very

keen eye to the main chance, and he failed to comprehend why they had not attempted to pass a Bill which would be so popular with the electors as a measure of this kind would be. Turning to the question of agriculture in the Eastern Counties, he had several times troubled the House with details upon the subject, which was connected very intimately with that part of the country in which he lived and which he represented. If hon. Members would read the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and would particularly study the evidence of Mr. Hunter Pringle they would, he was told, see that something like one-third of the stretch of country lying between Erith Marshes and the North Sea was out of cultivation—that was to say, was not under the plough. It was under rough grass, and might possibly support a few sheep for two or three months in the year. To show the disadvantage of such a state of things he might mention that, whereas one labourer would be needed to look after eight acres which were under cultivation, a single labourer was sufficient to look after 80 or 100 acres which were under rough grass. The result was that land went out of cultivation, and labourers were driven out of the country districts and swamped the labour market. He did not think that the depression in agriculture was the fault of the Liberal Government, but he did think that the Government might have given the agriculturists a few words of sympathy in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. Various suggestions had been made with a view to remedying the present state of things. The hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division (Mr. Everett) thought that salvation lay in bi-metallism; whilst another hon. Member advocated the placing of labourers on the land; and the Member for the Harborough Division (Mr. Logan) thought that the Agricultural Holdings Act should be enlarged and improved. He (Major Rasch) did not think these things would be of any real practical use. He thought, however, that the Agricultural Holdings Act should be enlarged, as was suggested at a mass meeting held under the presidency of Mr. C. W. Gray, at the Chelmsford Corn Exchange on Friday last, so that the yearly tenant might be allowed to sell his hay and straw without putting an

equivalent upon the land, whilst a man who was not a yearly tenant might be allowed to sell half his hay and straw without putting an equivalent on the land. Why could not the Government also bring in a Bill for the redemption of tithe based upon the Ashbourne Act, which had done so much good in Ireland? There was also the great question of local taxation to be considered. The Government had done something to increase taxation by the passing of their Local Government Act of last Session, and it was surely only fair that they should now do something to reduce it, or, at all events, to equalise it. The people in the agricultural districts did not ask for grants in aid because they knew such grants only meant putting 1s. into a man's pocket with one hand and taking 1s. 6d. out of it with the other. But they did ask for a real sweeping reform of local taxation.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words—

"And this House desires humbly to represent to Your Majesty that the depressed condition of trade and agriculture, the reduction in wages, the number of artisans and labourers out of employment, and the continued immigration of pauper aliens to augment the home labour competition, call for the immediate attention of Parliament."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) expressed regret that there was in the Most Gracious Speech from the Throne no allusion whatever, except one, to trade, industrial, and social questions. No one could look at the present state of industry in this country without feeling that in most of its aspects there was need not only for consideration but for action, if action were possible. He could not altogether agree with his hon. Friend in the remedies he had suggested, but he sympathised with his statement of regret that the Queen's Speech should have been marred by very important omissions. Of the want of employment he thought there could be no question. The Trade Union Returns of the Board of Trade showed that last month 7 per cent. of the men in the skilled trades were unemployed, and every Member of Parliament must have had experience of being appealed to by

numbers of people not for charity but for work. The other day he himself received communications from a constituent, and was also waited upon by a deputation of lithographers, who, of course, represented a very skilled trade, and who pointed out to him that the walls of the Metropolis were plastered with large placards bearing the imprint of New York. This was a lamentable fact, and if it indicated that we were losing the control of that which ought to be a source of great industrial employment it was extremely to be regretted, and ought to be remedied if at all possible. He was bound to congratulate his right hon. Friend (Mr. Mundella) on the fact that he had not lost sight of one of the very great causes of the loss of industry by this country, as was shown by the reference in the Queen's Speech to conciliation. Speaking as he did from experience of one town in which last year there were two great strikes or lock-outs, he (Sir A. Rollit) was able to say that very large amounts of trade were unnecessarily and frequently wantonly driven from this country owing to industrial disputes. He welcomed the promise of this Bill, as in the closing hours of last Session he had endeavoured to introduce some process of conciliation, and he was satisfied that if that principle were applied they had a most effective remedy for many of their present evils. Though they might regret that the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman did not go further, he thought the right hon. Gentleman was wise, to some extent, in tentatively limiting its provisions. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman adopted the principle that it should be voluntary, that he recognised the necessity of early intervention so as to combat any difference that might have taken place before it had reached an acute stage, and because it often became necessary to determine at an early stage what those who struck or who were locked out really wanted. What was really wanted was very often ill-defined, and if it could be put in more precise language it would often be capable of much easier solution. If that could be done they brought to bear public opinion, which was really, though it had no legal sanction, a most formidable weapon for eliminating right from wrong, and by supporting the right putting an end to most unfortunate differences. He should heartily sup-

port the Conciliation Bill, as he had done last Session. He believed that had the Bill for defining employers' liability been passed, it would have put an end to some of the disputes that arose. Our industrial institutions could only be founded on good relations between employer and employed, and so strongly did he feel that there were at present inequalities to be redressed that he was convinced the first day of the Session ought to have seen some allusion to, if not the re-introduction of, that Bill, and he cordially re-echoed the Seconder of the Address, that it was an omission that they must almost reprobate. Then he should have liked to have seen, believing as he did that the want of facilities for distributing employment was one great cause of the wants of employment, some allusion to the defective state of the law at present, some allusion to the defect that was alleged to exist in Corporations and Vestries not having the power to establish Labour Bureaux. They did it in some cases with great advantage; but if, as had been alleged in this House, there was any doubt as to their power in that direction, that doubt ought to be removed, because no one could have any doubt as to its advantage who had any experience of these bureaux for employment that were conducted at the Mansion House and through the London Chamber of Commerce. There were allusions in the Queen's Speech to all parts of the world except one which he should have thought would have been first mentioned—namely, Africa. He noticed the advantage of arbitration was mentioned, and the necessity to commerce of peace, which was most true; but who could forget the possible effect of Africa; who could close his eyes to the fact that this was the great field in which we might establish new markets? He was sure the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House of Commons would agree that if there was one subject on which the minds of all classes were fixed at this time it was the Report of that most able servant now lost to the State—he meant the Report of Sir Gerald Portal in reference to Uganda. He hoped the Report would not long be delayed, and that they would soon have the views and recommendations contained in it which were based on knowledge and experience. With reference to the question of pauper

Sir A. Rollet

aliens, he did not desire that subject to be exaggerated, as it often was, and he thought there was something to be said on each side. If emigration were restricted many avenues might be closed to our own people; but all nations, except ours, seemed to be agreed that it was undesirable that mere pauper aliens should be landed in foreign countries. The great objection of that was not only undue competition, and hence a large amount of sweating, but the reduction of the standard of living which produced a great social evil. He thought it was a subject well worthy consideration, and might be one that demanded legislation, but the statistics and other considerations must be first most carefully examined, for they had often been misrepresented. He had only one word more to say, and that was, to regret above all the omission of one matter which would have had the effect of removing great industrial defects in our country, of adding to its trade, of arming us for competition, and placing our legislation on a much better basis. Last Session he moved at an early period a Resolution which declared that—

“In the opinion of the House of Commons, railway rates had been most injurious to trade; and that the subject demanded the prompt and effective intervention of the Government.”

He heartily thanked the President of the Board of Trade for consenting to the appointment of the Committee for which he himself had asked, and he knew that the right hon. Gentleman had never lost interest in that subject; but he did ask consideration of the importance of the subject itself, how the cost of transport was almost the chief element in these days of industrial competition, and how the feeling was universal that these excessive rates were disastrous both to commerce and to the Railway Companies themselves; and remembering that the Committee sat for a great part of the Session and found that the rates had been most excessive, he was surprised there was no word of indication either of the importance of this subject or the necessity and want of that prompt and effective legislation which Parliament demanded, and which would have a very great effect on trade and employment. He might say a similar word on the subject of sea fisheries. Again, a Committee

which he had moved and carried had sat and declared that legislation was necessary to prevent the depletion of our seas. They needed greater scientific appliances for examination; and yet, though this great question was not only a trade question, and also a food and diet question, but a source from which the sailors came who manned our fleet, who were the backbone of our Marine and Royal Naval Reserve, no word was said in the Queen's Speech. He regretted, too, that there was no word about technical education. In some measure from the lack of technical education, especially in the vital matter of design and applied design, they found this great City of London placarded with large lithographs bearing that New York imprint. Something might be done in the direction of technical education by making the London University a teaching as well as an examining College. Yet here, again, there was no mention of the Report of the Commission. These were matters which, under one general phrase expressing sympathy for the want of employment and encouragement in providing means for securing it in a greater degree for the benefit of all classes, might have been introduced. He supported the Amendment as a protest against what he could not help thinking had been a matter of great neglect on a subject of the most vital import to employers and to the masses of the people.

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said, that the Amendment which had been moved by the Member for Central Sheffield had, as that hon. Member had said, been brought forward in no controversial spirit, but simply as a question to which the attention of the House ought to be directed. For his own part, he confessed he felt some regret on reading the Queen's Speech to find there was no allusion to agricultural depression. He represented one of the districts of Essex, a county which had suffered almost more than any other in England from this depression, and he felt that in alluding to the topic he was dealing with no Party matter. Another Essex Member seconded this Amendment, and there was one other Member who sat on the other side of the House who would also have supported the Amendment had he been alive to do so. But he regretted to say that death, as the result of an unfortunate

accident, had deprived them of the services of the hon. Member, whose loss would be felt exceedingly by every one in Essex, no matter to which Party he belonged. A map had recently been prepared by one of the Sub-Commissioners belonging to the Commission now sitting on the condition of agriculture which showed the amount of land wholly or partially out of cultivation in the Essex district. From that it appeared that between the Thames and the Blackwater there was an enormous amount of land which was entirely, or almost entirely, out of cultivation. In face of such a fact it was most natural to say that there must be something wrong somewhere, this land being close to London and suitable for wheat or beans. Another matter which affected the agricultural interest was the question of railway rates. He was sure the right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench, equally with themselves, felt deep sympathy with the agriculturists in their depression, and also sympathy with the condition of trade and the unemployed. But, after all, it would have been unfortunate that in the Speech there should have been placed words of sympathy unless there was a prospect of that sympathy taking some practical shape; and he quite perceived that in regard to agriculture there was considerable difficulty in legislating. He believed most hon. Members thought they knew of a cure for this depression, but they all disagreed as to what that particular cure was. He thought that one remedy was that there should be better market facilities afforded, both in the country districts and in London itself. It had always seemed to him that the condition of the London markets was anything but satisfactory, and a great deal must be done by establishing markets in various towns which should be in communication by telephone and telegraph with the London markets. He believed the object of the Government in appointing the Agricultural Commission was that the various remedies and suggestions should be inquired into and something done. The Commission had been sitting for a long time; it had taken a deal of evidence, and he heard hon. Gentlemen opposite say it had done nothing. That was strictly true; but they must remember that the Commission had a mass of

evidence to deal with, and they had not yet been able to move in the direction of remedies. Agriculturists would be glad when they did suggest remedies; and, for his part, he should very much have liked to see an Interim Report stating the facts which had been already elicited. Of course, it was impossible for the Government to propose any legislation until that Commission had reported, and he hoped the Commission would report as speedily as they could, and if they disagreed as to the remedies that they would disagree in such a way as to leave the responsibility to the Government. What they wanted to know was the exact state of agriculture, and then the Government must propose some remedies. As to railway rates, they were intimately connected with agriculture. It was complained that foreign agricultural produce could be brought to this country by steam very cheaply, and then the Railway Companies brought it from the ports to the various towns at equally cheap rates. The companies urged that this produce was collected for them, and given to them in large quantities. That was true; but, at the same time, it was a great hardship upon the English agriculturist that he was not able to have his goods collected, and then sent by the Railway Companies in a similarly cheap way. He recognised that the President of the Board of Trade had already given some assistance in this matter, and he hoped he would do more. A Resolution had been unanimously passed by the House declaring that these high rates were prejudicial to trade, and required to be altered. A Committee of the House had inquired into the question of railway rates. It had reported, and that Report now required consideration. He quite understood the difficulty in proposing at this early period of the Session any legislation on a matter which required such serious consideration, but the House was entitled to ask that the matter should receive the careful attention of the President of the Board of Trade. They desired for the agriculturist and trading community that there should, by legislation, be established some cheap and possible tribunal which could decide as to whether a rate was reasonable or not reasonable. As to the Amendment, he desired to ask the Mover and Seconder whether they thought any useful purpose

Mr. Dodd

would be served by carrying it to a Division. Upon the plain facts of the case there was really no division of opinion in the House. All Parties sympathised with the depression, and were anxious that remedies should be found. But he would observe that to take a Division meant a censure on the Government, which the Mover of the Amendment disclaimed, and, under these circumstances, he would ask the hon. Gentleman not to go to a Division.

*MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's), as a Representative of Irish labour, desired for a few moments to intervene in the Debate. He considered, with the gentlemen who had raised this discussion, that it was remarkable that in Her Most Gracious Majesty's Speech the cause of labour did not receive some notice. It was quite evident to those who studied the social conditions of the country that the working classes were the mainstay of its prosperity, and it was therefore strange that the right hon. Gentleman who had prepared Her Majesty's Speech should have overlooked the fact that there was a lamentable want of employment over the length and breadth of the country. In this matter the policy of the Government seemed to be that of masterly inactivity. We had in this country nothing approaching the system which existed in most Continental countries, whereby labour could be removed from one place to another in accordance with the necessities of the case. The Home Government had apparently not come to that state of perfection as regarded labour. In these countries the people were crowding into towns whilst the land was 'idle. In addition to this we had food importations pouring in from all parts of the world. In 1886 £28,500,000 of food products were imported into this country, and in 1892 nearly £125,000,000. Yet, in face of these facts, hon. Gentlemen who owned land expected rents to be paid and commerce to be prosperous whilst all the time the Government were blind to this extraordinary position of affairs, which was really the kernel to the nation's prosperity. They ought to strive to get the people back to the land, and to grant allotments to the working men in which to use their spare time and labour. The Government were responsible for many

other mistakes. He found that in 1892 over £43,000,000 of manufactured articles were imported into the Three Kingdoms; of textiles, over £28,000,000 being so imported. There was a preferential rate given to nearly every class of foreign goods brought into the country, and that was a great and most unfair disadvantage to the home manufacturer and producer. He believed in Free Trade, but he did not believe in protection for the foreigner at the expense of the native producer. The Merchandise Marks Act was at present a Statute existing on paper only. He believed it might be made useful and beneficial to the trade of the country, but it was not made applicable to the purposes for which it was passed, and was by no means enforced to the extent it ought to be. He had sent a newspaper the other day to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, which contained a very remarkable statement. It was to the effect that the produce of German convict labour was imported into this country, while thousands of our own artizans were starving for want of work. Was it not the duty of a Government to have regard to facts like these? The President of the Board of Trade appeared to think that he (Mr. Field) was joking, but he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he was in earnest. Whether the Government was Liberal or Conservative the time was coming when it would have to consider these matters that were exercising the brains of the working men of the country or go out of Office. Another thing to be borne in mind was that technical education was fostered in foreign countries far more than it was here. We were 100 years behind such countries as France, Belgium, and Germany in this respect. Then, as to strikes, we had a great deal to learn from foreign countries. There were far fewer strikes on the Continent than in this country. Why was that? Because on the Continent the Government had organised Conciliation Boards to meet emergencies, and did not allow matters to drift into commercial war before endeavouring to bring about peace. They seemed to be asleep in the country. Trade was leaving us, our artizans were not employed, and matters had drifted into a state of chaos. With regard to labour

bureaux, he did not see why we should not have them here as they had them in France and elsewhere. The President of the Board of Trade might say that all these were matters of detail, but it was attention to matters of detail which made Governments perfect, and enabled them to face foreign competition. He trusted this Debate would bring the Government to a sense of their responsibility in approaching this question.

*SIR F. FITZWYGRAM (South Hants, Fareham) said, he shared very strongly the regret expressed by hon. Members that there had been no mention made of these matters in the Queen's Speech. He did not ask for Protection, believing it to be dead and gone. ["No, no!"] Yes; in the ordinary sense of the word, and for the reason that they had more consumers—more mouths to feed—than they had producers; and the greater number always won the victory at elections. He did not believe in Protection, nor did he believe that Protection would be necessary if other proper measures were adopted. The great burden on agriculture was the crushing amount of rates and the extremely unfair difference in taxation, relatively, between real and personal property. In most parishes the assessment came to about 20 per cent. on the value of the land, and in some cases where the tithe had not fallen as much as the value it amounted to 50 per cent. The tax on personalty was only 3 per cent. If a man had £5,000 a year in land, he would have to pay £1,000 a year in local taxation, and perhaps a good deal more, whereas if he had £5,000 a year in personalty, he would only pay 3 per cent. on it plus the local taxation on the house he lived in, or about £60—£210 a year in all. He believed that if there was a fair readjustment of local taxation agriculture might be again made to flourish in this country, and that in this direction the real remedy for the present distress was to be found. Personalty at the present day exceeded realty by five or six to one, so that one-sixth of the wealth of the country paid 20 per cent. in taxation and the other five-sixths paid only 3 per cent. The distribution, therefore, was not equal and not what it ought to be. Why should not the man with £5,000 a year personalty pay as much for the maintenance of the poor, for the maintenance

of the roads he used, and for police protection as the man with £5,000 a year really? This was a very serious question. The subject of the prosperity of agriculture concerned more millions of working men in the country than the prosperity of any other industry, and they would do more to bring about a restoration of that prosperity by a fair readjustment of local taxation than by any other step they could take.

*Mr. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow) joined in the expression of regret that the Government had not referred in the Address to the question of the unemployed or to the depression in trade. But though he joined in that expression of regret, he could not support the Amendment, because in that Amendment there was a special emphasis laid on the question of the immigration of the foreign pauper, and the Mover of it had pointed to the exclusion of the foreign pauper as a remedy for the unemployed difficulty. For his own part, he believed the immigration of the foreign pauper had really little to do with the present condition of labour in this country. Indeed, he was confident, from his knowledge of the state of things in the East End of London, that if they excluded every foreign pauper immigrant to-morrow, they would have done nothing for the solution of the question of unemployed labour, and for that reason he could not consent to vote against the Government. The facts were simple, though the problem that sprung out of them was probably as intricate and as difficult as any problem this country ever had to face. They had on the one hand a vast amount of unemployed capital, and on the other a vast amount—an unknown amount—of unemployed labour, and they had also a large amount of raw material. They had at their hand the factors that produced wealth, and yet, for some reason or other, the country was unable to make use of them. He did not believe they would ever solve either the question of depression of trade or of unemployed labour until they found why it was that with the factors of wealth placed at their disposal they were unable to create it. The conditions under which capital was used were the same as those having reference to the employment of labour. They had capital competing for use in

precisely the same way as they had labour competing for employment, and unless they could see a means by which capital and labour could be brought together, they would never arrive at a satisfactory conclusion of the present difficulty. There had been suggestions made to the effect that the unemployed problem really sprang from the condition of agriculture. There could be no question that if agriculture could be made prosperous it would do a great deal towards absorbing the unemployed labour of the country, but the cause of the depression in agriculture seemed to him precisely the same as that of the general depression of the country. The view had been advanced that they had to increase the power of demand by altering the currency of the country. That had been mentioned by the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment, but he (Mr. Macdonald) confessed that if the alteration of the currency tended to alter the prices of commodities, he could not for the life of him see how the alteration could in the slightest degree affect the actual demand for labour or for commodities. But he had risen for the purpose of saying that he would be contented if the Government would promise to bring in a popular Budget, because there was no remedy which was so likely to improve the trade of this country as the removal as far as possible of taxation from the shoulders of the poor to the shoulders of the richer members of the community. What they had to do was to increase the power of the poorer classes to demand commodities, and to check the enormous saving powers which were given under existing conditions to those who possessed large incomes. If the Government did not promise improvements in this direction it was possible that another opportunity would arise to divide on an Amendment more in accordance with his own view, and he should certainly divide on that.

*Mr. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich) said, he rose to support the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Dodd) in the appeal he had made to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would see that in regard to the question of railway rates the interests of British farmers were safeguarded, and that there was a tribunal established to

say whether rates were reasonable or not. He joined in the tribute paid to the late Member for Romford, whose untimely death was to be deplored. Everyone would admit that he was a most diligent Member, and took the greatest interest in the proceedings of the House. With regard to the Amendment before the House, he thanked the hon. Member for Sheffield for introducing it; and heartily agreed with those who deplored the omission from the Queen's Speech of the subject of the depression in agriculture. He regretted that nothing had been heard on the subject from the Mover or Seconder of the Address, or from the Leader of the House. They all knew that that depression existed in a very extreme degree, and they knew it had reached a very acute crisis in the wheat-growing counties, and he was sure that in saying this the Minister for Agriculture, whom he saw opposite, would not disagree with him. The Government, as they knew, had appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject, and it was to be hoped that the investigation would soon terminate. A great deal of evidence had been taken by the previous Commission, appointed in 1878, and he strongly felt that it was not so much further evidence of the existence of depression that they required as some remedies for the improvement of the existing state of things. He thought that more of the recommendations of the previous Commission should have been carried out before this. The charge for the indoor poor, for instance, might have been made an Imperial rather than a local one, and that facilities should have been given for the redemption of tithe on equitable terms. He trusted that in the near future something would be done to lighten local burdens. There were many ways in which the Government could alleviate the agricultural depression that now existed if they set their hands to the task, and he called upon the Minister for Agriculture to explain the omission in the Queen's Speech.

*MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford) said, there was one subject germane to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Howard Vincent) which had not been referred to in the course of the Debate. It was a subject which the American people thought to be a great

cause of the depreciation in prices in that country, and they had already taken steps to remedy it by bringing forward Bills in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. He referred to the practice of speculating in produce. It was alleged with considerable force of argument that the result of speculating in wheat, for instance, was to create an entirely false price for that article—that though the value of wheat as it reached the consumer was the same, the Clearing House in New York fixed an artificial price which was telegraphed all over the world, and regulated the English producer in the English market irrespective of whether the price was remunerative or not. A gentleman who was thoroughly acquainted with this subject, and who had written a book upon it, had been summoned to give evidence before the Royal Commission; therefore the subject would be brought under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, whether he had devoted attention to it as yet or not. And not only was the price of wheat affected in this way, but the price of silver too, which, of course, affected other industries besides agriculture. The price of silver had not fallen through the breaking of the Latin compact—it was years after the demonetization of silver that the fall took place. It was to be traced first to “corners” in America, and afterwards to the action of speculators. He would suggest that the Government should take a leaf out of the book of the American Legislature, and introduce legislation directed against “time bargains” in produce. Should the subject be dealt with in the Report of the Royal Commission, so as to make it clear that these “time bargains,” on produce had a material effect on the English grower, he thought they ought to have some statement from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade to the effect that it was a matter worthy the attention of the Government.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) said, that his hon. Friend the Member for the Central Division of Sheffield had moved his Amendment in a very thin House, and had mainly addressed his speech to him (Mr. Mun-

della). Had the hon. Gentleman done him the honour of giving him notice of what were to be the terms of his Amendment he might have been better prepared to answer the remarkable statistics and arguments he had addressed to the House. He was bound to say that some of them were startling. The hon. Gentleman who had last spoken had asked them to say something about "time bargains" and "futures." It was true that a Bill dealing with the subject had been introduced into the American Senate, but it had never become law. Mr. W. H. Smith had paid some attention to the subject, and when appealed to with reference to it had said that if time bargains were left alone they would cure themselves. Mr. W. H. Smith had been wise in what he had said. The House, he thought, would have been startled if the Government had said in the Queen's Speech that they proposed to bring in a Bill to prevent time bargains in future. He did not know what would happen in, say, Liverpool, or what would be said of an attempt to deal with ships arriving there with corn. He thought the less they interfered with trade the better. The more they lightened the springs of industry by making the burdens lighter and leaving men to find out the best methods themselves the better it would be. In the Amendment which had been moved there was enough for a Queen's Speech itself. His hon. Friend enumerated a number of measures in moving his Amendment sufficient to comprise such a Speech, and other speakers had urged the adoption of as many measures as would form the subject of legislation for a whole Parliament. He himself did not profess to speak—it would be presumption on his part to speak—with any authority on the depression of agriculture; but he carefully watched all the Returns and Reports and the effects of measures for the benefit of agriculture, and this he did know, that, although we had great depression in this country, it was no less in France. He thought it was even worse in that country. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division (Mr. Chaplin) were present he should appeal to him, because he had investigated the state of things in France, and had found the agricultural depression very great. It

was the same in Germany, and there was a struggle now going on in the Reichstag about it. It was the same in Austria-Hungary. It was the same, or even worse, in America. Again, take the Australian Colonies, and what were the conditions there? Notwithstanding that they had in Australia land almost at a nominal value, the last Reports showed that there had been such a large influx of the unemployed from Australia to the Cape that the authorities at the Cape were warning Australia and all the Colonies not to encourage emigration to the Cape, because there was no employment for them there, and if they went there they would find great distress. His hon. Friend had been making a journey not quite round the world, but half round it, and he should like to know where he had found prosperity.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
In the West Indies.

MR. MUNDELLA : The British West Indies?

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
Yes.

MR. MUNDELLA : Jamaica, I suppose?

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
Yes.

MR. MUNDELLA : Jamaica, where they were growing fruits for the American markets, where the negroes had got possession of the land, and cut it up into small patches for growing fruits of all kinds for the American markets. He believed that was really the ground of the prosperity in the West Indies. He (Mr. Mundella) had read some of the hon. and gallant Gentleman's speeches with regard to his journey partly round the world, and more dismal reading it would be hard to find. Instead of finding people trading in South America and the Brazils, he had found them fighting. He seemed to have found no prosperity anywhere, and to-night he had not given them the slightest glimpse of any measure which, if introduced by the Government, would be likely to cure the depression of trade or agriculture. He had thrown out some rather dark hints about Protection, but nothing more. What, he should like to ask the hon. Member, had Protection done for agriculture anywhere? What had Protection done for America? In

Mr. Mundella

America, although they had enormous balances in the Exchequer, what was the condition of industry according to the description of Chauncey Depew in a recent article? Many of the mills were now closed, and many were working short time; whilst in the mining districts there was such a state of things as no English workman would tolerate, the men working half-time, and two sets of hands being employed in order that two sets of families might live, and the truck system prevailing to an extent that was never experienced in this country at any period. No; the British workman was better off, after all, than the American workman, and this country had no conception of the suffering there had been for some time among the working classes in America. With respect to agriculture, a complaint was made last Session that the Queen's Speech was not specific enough with reference to agricultural depression. The Prime Minister then proposed that there should be a Committee of the House to inquire into the matter, but that offer was refused. At last the Government took on themselves to appoint a Royal Commission—and a very good Commission—who were making most valuable and exhaustive inquiries. It was said that the Commission had as yet done nothing, but how a Commission which had only sat six months, and which had such a large subject to deal with, could have done more he failed to see. He was a member of the Labour Commission which had been sitting for three years and had not yet reported.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
Why not?

*MR. MUNDELLA said, that anyone who asked that question could not understand the enormity of the subjects to be dealt with. If the hon. Member wished for further information he had better address himself to the Chairman of the Commission. With respect to the depressed condition of our industries, the hon. Member spoke of a fall in the Returns, and took great care to put this fall on the Government.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
Hear, hear!

*MR. MUNDELLA said, the hon. Member cheered that, and when he went to his constituents he put the whole re-

sponsibility for the depression of trade on the Liberal Government. ["Hear, hear!" and laughter.] No doubt that was very amusing. It was all very well for the country, but they knew better in that House, and the hon. Member knew better himself. Every falling-off of £5,000,000 in our exports caused depression, and every increase of £5,000,000 made a considerable increase in the amount of employment and prosperity. What had happened since 1890? There had been a falling-off in our exports of nearly £45,000,000 from the highest point we had ever reached, but £30,000,000 of that fell off before the present Government came into power.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
It was because you were coming.

*MR. MUNDELLA said, he had heard some bold excuses in his life, but that exceeded anything he had ever heard. Coming events sometimes cast their shadows before, but not two years before. Was it because the present Government were coming in in August, 1892, that the Baring crisis occurred in the autumn of 1890? Was it because the present Government were coming in in 1892 that the exports of British and Irish products fell off by £17,000,000 in 1891, and then fell off another £13,000,000 before the late Government left Office, making a total falling-off of £30,000,000 under the late and £15,000,000 under the present Government? They all regretted this falling-off, but it was not fair to use such arguments as the hon. Member had used and to mislead working men on these questions. It was not creditable to go on to platforms in the country with an untruth in their mouths. The proper way to deal with working men was to try to tell them the truth. The hon. Member had referred to *The Labour Gazette*, which was an admirable organ the like of which was not published in any other part of the world, but he was sorry to say the hon. Member did not read it.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :
I do read it.

*MR. MUNDELLA said, that being the case, he was sorry to find that the hon. Member did not understand it. One thing or the other. If the hon. Member would look at the general summary in the first article on

the first page of the last number of *The Labour Gazette* he would find the following passage :—

"The Returns received by the Labour Department for January point to an appreciable improvement in the state of employment during the month, and the general outlook is more hopeful than for some time past. The Returns from Trade Societies show a diminution in the proportion of unemployed members at the end of January, as compared both with the previous month and with the corresponding period of last year."

The article went on to show exactly in what proportion the improvement was apparent. A Return made by 37 Trade Societies showed that out of 353,000 men 7 per cent. were in receipt of unemployed benefit in January, as compared with 7·9 per cent. in December last.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly read the figures respecting the unemployed ? Will he read straight on ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I am reading straight on. In the 23 Societies from which Returns were also received in January, 1893, the percentage of unemployed was 7·7 last month, as compared with 9·9 on the corresponding date last year, so that it is 20 per cent. better than at the same time last year.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : I am very loth to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but as he refers so often to me I am bound to. He has compared last month's figures with those of 1889, when only 1·5 were unemployed.

*MR. MUNDELLA said, that would not do. The hon. Gentleman had said nothing about 1889, but had stated that the want of employment was worse than last year. As a matter of fact, it was 20 per cent. better, and there was an improvement in trade generally. The hon. Gentleman had said that there had been a great reduction in wages. He (Mr. Mundella) rejoiced to believe that, on the whole, England had never passed through a time of depression with fewer reductions of wages than there had been during the last three years. Whether this was due to the state of organisation among the working classes or to a better feeling betwixt employers and employed he would not say, but he was certain that never had England during his lifetime passed through a period of such depression with

such small reductions in wages. There was no reduction during the coal strike of last year. The 40 per cent. had been maintained, and throughout the mining districts there had been an increase, and not a reduction, in wages. *The Labour Gazette* showed that this was the case. On page 34 of the last number it would be found that about 110,000 miners had during the month received a rise in wages. About 90,000 Welsh miners had had their wages raised under the sliding scale, whilst 20,000 Northumberland miners had also received an increase.

*MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked whether it was not a fact that where the sliding scale operated the wages were reduced during the early part of the year, and that the increase meant only a return to the former condition of things ?

MR. MUNDELLA said, that supposing that was the case, he was only showing that there had been increases rather than decreases during recent months. As to the shipbuilding industry, the first page of *The Labour Gazette* showed that the unemployed members of Unions had fallen from 17 per cent. to 13·8 per cent. If there had been any industry which had been subjected to vast expansion in recent years it had been the shipbuilding industry. Shipbuilders had not erred in building too little, but had rather erred in building too much. There had been an excess of production over the requirements, and the growth of British shipping had been one of the marvels of our industry. As to the number of artisans and labourers out of work, he thought the House must see that, so far from going from bad to worse, we had gone through a period of intense depression, which was slowly mending. He was afraid it was but slowly ; but, taking it for all in all, the condition of the British workman was as good as that of any other workman in the world. Recent inquiries showed that the length of the working day and the low rates of wages in Germany were so remarkable that it was very difficult indeed for England to hold her own in competition with that country. He was assured last month, also, by the highest authorities that France had not shown such a period of severe depression and misery for more than half a century as during the past year. As to agriculture,

Mr. Mundella

hon. Members were aware that France had increased the duties on grain. Monsieur Lesage, a peasant proprietor, in opposing the imposition of the higher duties only a short time ago, said those duties were unjust and inhuman, and he drew a deplorable contrast between agriculture and wages 20 years ago and 10 years ago and their condition now, stating that at the present time wages averaged less than half their former rate. The effect of the increased duty on wheat in France was to impose on the bread consumers a tax of 720,000 francs a year. When one was acquainted with the burden of taxation in France and the enormous loads which had to be carried in every branch of agriculture, the effect of the additional taxation on bread must be frightful. It must be borne in mind that the French labourer ate very little else but bread. The average consumption of wheat in France was nine bushels per head, as against six bushels per head in England. The result was that a duty of nearly £3 per annum had been imposed upon every family in France for bread. There was only one more point to which he wished to refer—namely, the continued immigration of pauper aliens. He had been very glad to hear the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. J. A. Macdonald). His hon. Friend, who had thoroughly investigated the question, had expressed the opinion that pauper aliens did not affect the industrial problem in East London, and he (Mr. Mundella) thought that was becoming more and more apparent to every one who investigated the question. The term “pauper aliens” was a misnomer. The aliens were not paupers, and the remarkable fact was that they never became paupers.

An hon. MEMBER: They take the wages of Englishmen.

MR. MUNDELLA said, they did not take the wages of Englishmen. On the contrary, the evidence given before the Labour Commission was that they started and developed new industries, such as the shoddy slipper industry in Yorkshire. As a matter of fact, England had fewer aliens than almost any other nation in Europe. For every alien in England there were five in France. An hon. Member opposite had said that we

were the only nation that did not keep aliens out. He (Mr. Mundella) could only say that, aided by the present Prime Minister (Lord Rosebery), he had done everything in his power to make it known throughout Europe, and especially in Poland and Russia, that there was no room for aliens in this country.

*SIR A. ROLLIT said, his remark was that England did not keep mere pauper aliens out as other nations did, by legislation, so as to prevent their coming on the rates.

MR. MUNDELLA said, they might get a taste of such legislation themselves if they did, and then who would be the sufferers? The recent Census had shown that in Great Britain there were less than 200,000 aliens, whilst France had nearly 1,100,000. He appealed to the House to say whether it was necessary, under these circumstances, to bring in a Bill on the subject? The late Government knew better than to do it. They were pressed very much by their supporters on the subject, but they very wisely refrained from doing it, and he was quite sure that the present Government would have to look very carefully into the question before they ventured to do it. In a Report made to the United States Government it had been shown that during the last 10 years the United States had received over 400,000 foreign Jews. He thought he had answered the whole of the points raised, and it was only because he did not wish to weary the House that he had not gone into them at greater length. Although these matters were not all put into the Queen's Speech, they were by no means overlooked. Did hon. Members want them to put all their goods into the shop window? The Bill with regard to railway rates was prepared; but hon. Gentlemen would understand that he had to submit it to the Law Officers of the Crown and to the Lord Chancellor, and he hoped to have it introduced and referred to the Grand Committee on Trade before Easter. He could promise the House that there should be no delay in proceeding with the Bill so far as he was concerned, and that the Government would not fall short of any pledges they had made.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, he, for one, must confess that he had listened with feelings of disappointment to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. The right hon. Gentleman said the Government could not be expected to put all their goods into the shop window. He was expecting that the right hon. Gentleman would go on to say that if they only waited a little while, and, as it were, allowed him to arrange his counter, he would find some measure which would be of advantage both to the commercial and agricultural communities. Not only had the President of the Board of Trade not allowed them to hope that much, but he had distinctly told them that nothing was to be done in the way of legislation, and he had gone round the world in order to show how little could be done by legislation to obtain the object sought. One word upon the subject of the alien immigrant. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade had quoted statistics, but he did not quote the Returns for January, 1894. Why was that? Because they had been withheld from Parliament. [Mr. MUNDELLA : No.] Yes, they had been withheld from Parliament. He challenged the right hon. Gentleman to deny his statement. The Return did not reach him, and he thought it was through some inadvertence. He made personal inquiry at the Vote Office, and he was told that the Returns had not been furnished for distribution. He dared say the right hon. Gentleman would make a note of that.

Mr. MUNDELLA : Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will put a question upon the Paper.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER : The right hon. Gentleman had been quoting statistics, and he (Mr. J. Lowther) had directed his attention to these suppressed Returns. The latest Returns he had before him on this subject were those of 1893, and they showed a marked increase in the arrivals of aliens who desired to make this country their home. The right hon. Gentleman differed very widely from the present Prime Minister upon the subject of alien immigration. The right hon. Gentleman had heard the

Member for Central Sheffield quote a speech delivered by the Prime Minister upon the subject of alien immigration, in which he recognised the fact that a system of immigration which brought large numbers of workpeople into competition with native industry was a state of affairs which would be calculated to raise very grave industrial disturbance and would demand consideration in any country in which they occurred. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade had actually boldly announced himself as an advocate of free trade in sweating. [Mr. MUNDELLA : No.] That was what his statement actually amounted to. He had told them, in effect, that not only did not alien immigration deprive Englishmen of their employment, but that it was actually an advantage to the industry of the country. He should like to see him argue that out with a deputation of working men. He himself had had interviews on the subject, and it had been shown to him that thousands of working men were kept out of employment by foreigners, and that thousands on thousands were landed on these shores to take up employment which our own people were unable to obtain.

Mr. MUNDELLA said, that the right hon. Gentleman had complained that the numbers of alien immigrants who arrived in this country in January last had not been included in the Return which had been furnished to hon. Members, but he would find the figures fully set forth in *The Labour Gazette*.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER said, it would not be respectful to the House that he should detain it while he endeavoured to master the right hon. Gentleman's journalistic venture which he had taken so many opportunities that evening of exploiting, but it was clear that the right hon. Gentleman had made his statement at second-hand. He thought that he was fully justified in saying that the right hon. Gentleman who represented the great Trade Department of the country saw no objection to the continuance of this alien immigration, and certainly the right hon. Gentleman had held out no hope that legislation on the subject would be initiated by Her Majesty's Government, who were perfectly satisfied with things as they were.

When he himself had spoken upon this question he had always taken care to state that nothing could be further from his wish than to foster racial or religious animosity. He, however, did not think it right that the charitable contributions of the wealthy Jewish community should be expended in supporting here the paupers of foreign nations. In his opinion, public feeling was fully ripe for comprehensive legislation upon the subject. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the legislative action of the United States with regard to this question, but it should be remembered that that legislation was prohibitive as regarded the immigration of many classes of persons, and that there was a strong popular movement in favour of curtailing undesirable immigration. He trusted that when the subject of alien immigration was raised in that House in a more definite form they would receive a more satisfactory reply from the Government than the right hon. Gentleman had given them that night. He thought, however, that the hon. and gallant Member would be wise in not taking the sense of the House upon the subject on that occasion. As to the more general question that had been raised by the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member—namely, that which related to the unemployed—the right hon. Gentleman had delivered himself of an old lecture of the Cobden Club. The right hon. Gentleman could not deny that every corner of the world except Great Britain was Protectionist. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to a speech that had been delivered in the French Assembly in favour of Free Trade; but the right hon. Gentleman had forgotten to look at the Division List on the occasion, because had he done so he would have found that the great majority of the French Members—about two to one—had voted in favour of Protectionist views. The proposed new tariff of the United States was much more protective than anything that would ever have been suggested by an English Protectionist, and the elections showed that there was no popular sympathy with Free Trade. But Protection was not the only remedy suggested to the Government. Another suggestion was that there should be a more close commercial connection be-

tween the Mother Country and the Colonies, on a preferential basis—a commercial union which would enclose one-fifth of the whole surface of the earth and which would remove inducements to the colonists to foster trade outside the British Empire. Opinion on the subject of Free Trade was being merely modified in this country, and measures to promote a truly Imperial policy would be much more welcomed by the people than Bills to promote electoral arrangements and Party objects, which did not commend themselves to those who had at heart the good of all classes in this country.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, they had had an interesting discussion upon this Amendment, and he hoped they might now come to a decision upon it, as he had already pointed out how limited the time of the House was. He always listened with pleasure to the right hon. Gentleman, who was clear and incisive in his opinions and constant in his convictions, and who generally managed to lift the veil and to reveal what others more prudently concealed. The true meaning of the Amendment had been made known; the British had been exhibited as the only Free Traders in the world. The object of the Amendment was to obtain from the House of Commons a declaration in favour of a return to Protection. Well, nothing could be more clear than the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. Protectionist Governments found that the dose of Protection did not satisfy, but had to be doubled. That had happened in a neighbouring country where they had high duties on corn and the food of the people. At the present time the duty on corn there was 13s. or 14s. a quarter, and the agricultural interest still declared it to be wholly insufficient. He would not argue the question of Free Trade and Protection with the right hon. Gentleman at that moment. Most hon. Members had made up their minds on the subject on one side or the other, and the great majority of the people of the country had also made up their minds. At all events, Her Majesty's Government had no hesitation on the question, and, regarding the Resolution as one in favour of Protection, they would vote against it. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the present Prime Minister. He would refer him to the late Conservative

Prime Minister, who had more than once stated to his Party that a return to Protection in this country was impossible. That was an issue which was very plain on the present occasion, and certainly the Party on the Government side of the House would give no vote which would favour the idea of a return to Protection. No doubt when the right hon. Gentleman was the Leader of a great Protectionist majority in the House of Commons he would be able to give effect to his views, but he would suggest that for the present the House might leave the discussion of the question and come to a decision upon the Resolution.

*MR. TOMLINSON said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had pursued a method with which they were very familiar. It was not the first time they had heard him telling them that a particular vote was to be construed in an unnatural sense, and that they were to go into the Lobby not upon the question they were discussing and had to decide, but upon some esoteric question which the right hon. Gentleman evolved from his inner consciousness. They were told this was a question of Protection. In his view, it did not affect the question of Protection at all. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was in the House when the Amendment was moved. It stated that the House desired to represent that the depressed condition of trade and agriculture, the reduction of wages, the large numbers of artisans and labourers out of employment, and the immigration of aliens were matters for the immediate attention of Parliament. Where was there a word relating to the question of Protection? It was very convenient for the right hon. Gentleman and the other Members of the Government to ignore altogether all reference to want of employment and these other matters contained in the Amendment. He thought if they looked at this question from the point of view of the interests of Party there was nothing they could wish better than that the Government should treat it in this manner, but it was their duty to look at the facts and to do what could be done in order to remedy the existing state of things. There was a large number of unemployed, and it was more and more difficult to get work even in places where the most favourable con-

ditions prevailed. He would take Liverpool, for instance. He had recently been told that in Liverpool for years past the times were never known to be so bad and so much want of employment to prevail. The question of the want of employment was the first and foremost raised by the Amendment. Then there was the question of pauper immigration. Whatever the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade might think, this was a serious thing for consideration. They were told there would be occasion at some future time for dealing and speaking more fully upon it, and he did not propose to pursue it now. But there was one question which had been alluded to by the President of the Board of Trade, and that was his principal reason for rising—that was, the method in which he proposed to deal with this great question of the railway rates. The right hon. Gentleman was aware that he (Mr. Tomlinson) was a member of a deputation which waited upon him in regard to the subject some time ago. It was, perhaps, no information to him that that deputation went away very scantily satisfied with the remarks he made; and he was very sorry that that night his declarations did not point to any satisfactory settlement. What he said was that the Government intended to bring in a Bill on the lines of the Report of the Select Committee.

MR. MUNDELLA: I said nothing of the sort. I said that the Bill would fully satisfy the recommendations of the Committee.

*MR. TOMLINSON said, the question they had to consider was not whether the Bill satisfied the recommendations of the Select Committee, but whether it was satisfactory to the country. What he was coming to was this—the right hon. Gentleman talked about referring that Bill to the Standing Committee on Trade before Easter. There was only one way in which that could be done, and that was by taking the Second Reading without discussion. If the Bill went to a Grand Committee before Easter they could not have any discussion in that House, and that was a mode of dealing with important questions against which he must protest. It was idle to minimise the importance of it. Then the Resolution dealt with

agricultural depression as well as with trade depression. He was one of those who thought that the excessive proportion of railway rates levied upon the agricultural produce of this country was one factor which materially contributed to that depression. He protested again against the idea that the Standing Committee on Trade should be treated as equivalent to a Second Reading Debate as well as the Committee stage. If the Government considered their Bills of importance they ought to be allowed to be debated in the House of Commons as well as by a Grand Committee. He should endeavour, with the support of other Members, to prevent any Bill of so much importance from being smuggled through the House.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said, he must express the indignation which he felt at finding that the appeals made to the Minister for Agriculture were addressed to deaf ears. They agriculturists did not think that so important a subject as that of agriculture ought to be treated in the House of Commons with a laugh and a sneer from the Minister who was supposed to represent its interests. It must be the absolute opinion of everybody who knew anything of it that their question was not a petty one, nor a fictitious or bogus one. They were very much in earnest, and were endeavouring to press upon that House that the condition of agriculture was such as required ten times more attention than even the matters mentioned in Her Majesty's Speech. He did not want to see time wasted upon matters which did not immediately affect the welfare of the country. At the same time, they knew perfectly well that their interest and industry must take its part and share with the other industries and interests of the country. They did not demand any excessive share of attention. They did not ask for any royal road to relief, but they thought it was not too much to ask that there should be some expression which showed that the Government were awake to the situation. They had had nothing in the miserable months of the last Session to help them. He knew it was impossible for the Minister for Agriculture not to shadow forth any great scheme, but he thought that some little should be done to relieve the pressure which bore upon them at

this moment. He did not know that they ought to treat the matter from an electioneering point of view; but if they did so, he would tell the Minister for Agriculture that he would take nothing by his policy of silence, which might be construed into a policy of indifference. ["Oh!"] That was an accustomed sound to hear from urban Members when a rural Member was speaking, but cheap sneers did not help them. If the real interests of the country were taken into consideration it would be found that the interests represented by the agricultural Members was largely in excess of that represented by those who had jeered at him at that moment. He was willing that it should go forth to the country that while the urban Members jeered him, they on that side of the House at all events were anxious to make it clear that there some interest was taken in the industry of agriculture. He would like to urge that, although this Amendment might deal principally with the depression of trade, there did exist also a depression in agriculture at least as deep and severe. Such a state of things should not be disregarded by the Government because it affected other branches of industry, and he thought they had a right, considering that they had been struggling for years to try and better their position, to expect that any practical and responsible Government should preface the work of the Session with at least some indication of their wish to do what could be done to relieve their depression and help them in their necessity.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden) said, he could not allow these remarks to pass unanswered. It was absolutely untrue to say that the present Government had taken no interest in agriculture during the past year, as was suggested by the hon. Member. The sympathy of the Government was as deep in that direction as that of any hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House. They had exhibited their sympathy with agricultural depression by every means in their power, and although he had listened with the greatest attention to the speech of the hon. Member he had failed to gather what remedies he proposed. If

there were any remedies for the present regrettable position, hon. Members opposite who represented the agricultural interest in that House had kept those remedies most unpatriotically locked in the depths of their own breasts. They were told that something must be done, but the right hon. Gentleman had told them he had not the slightest idea what that something was.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY: I did not say I had no idea. I suggested that the right hon. Gentleman had no idea.

*MR. GARDNER, continuing, said, so far as he knew, every suggestion made from the opposite side had been carried out. There was no royal method of bringing about a restoration of agricultural prosperity. Agricultural depression existed quite as much in other countries as at home—quite as much in France, Austria-Hungary, and elsewhere. In America nearly 4,000,000 acres of wheat had gone out of cultivation. In these circumstances, what was it that hon. Members wished the Government to do, and what did he accuse them of? As far as the Government were concerned, they thoroughly recognised the lamentable position of agriculture in some parts of the country; but it was not the same all over Great Britain. In Scotland this year the harvest had been above the average; and in Ireland the harvest had been one of the best on record. While admitting, therefore, that on the whole the present state of agriculture was not a satisfactory one, he recommended the hon. Member to turn to the prices, where he would find that with the exception of wheat agriculturists were not so badly off as last year. Barley had increased in price, and oats also showed a small increase; and viewing the country as a whole, they were not worse off in this country than in other countries. The Government had given the most anxious consideration to the subject in the past, and any practical suggestion to benefit the agricultural interest would be considered with a desire and anxiety to give effect to it.

*MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said, he rose to vindicate his hon. Friends behind him from the attack made by the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Agriculture. Surely no one

who was really interested in the agriculture of the country could be surprised that hon. Members on either side of the House should rise and express their amazement that in the Gracious Speech from the Throne not one single word had been directed to the extremely deplorable condition of that interest. What was the reply of the right hon. Gentleman opposite? He says—"True it may be that your agricultural condition is depressed, but we are no worse off than foreign countries." Did he not know that the depression in every foreign country was worse, if possible, than it was at home? Surely, then, that was no answer to the entire neglect of the agricultural interest shown in the Speech addressed to the House of Commons that night. His hon. Friend pointed out that a Royal Commission had been appointed; and that reminded him of the course pursued by the Government in the last Session. When they met last Session, the depression being the same as now, they were informed that it was the intention of the Government to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the circumstances of the depression, and to propose such remedies as might in their judgment be available. What was the course pursued by the Government? The desire of those sitting on that side of the House was that they might have a day or half a day, or only a few hours, to consider and discuss this question. What was the reply of the Government? "We won't give you an hour." That was the encouragement they received from the Government at that time. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Agriculture told them that, with the exception of wheat, prices were better, and he quoted the prices of barley; but when, and where, and in what markets?

MR. GARDNER said, that what he had stated was information contained in Returns to the Board of Agriculture.

MR. CHAPLIN: What kind and what character of barley was this? They always had good prices for the best samples of barley; but how many good samples were there in this country? Under exceptional circumstances there might be no great cause for complaint; but if they went beyond that, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would find it very difficult indeed to support the statement that, with the exception of the

prices of wheat, the prices of agricultural produce at the present time were generally more satisfactory—

MR. GARDNER: This last year?

*MR. CHAPLIN: Than last year, when they were already in the depths of depression, and were suffering more than ever before. He was surprised that the right hon. Gentleman should refer to that. The right hon. Gentleman asked his hon. Friends to point to a single suggestion in support of the agricultural interest which had not met with a favourable reception from the Government. Last year they pointed out that what agriculture was really suffering from was the great fall in the prices of agricultural produce of every kind, and on that side of the House they suggested to the right hon. Gentleman what was the proper remedy. In their opinion, the fall in prices was due to monetary causes. That was one of the suggestions they made. Had that met with a favourable reception? It had been pointed out that if the Government could not accept that proposition they could do something in the way of considering whether it was not possible to remove from the land the great burden of rates which fell upon it so unjustly and heavily. If the Government could not accept the proposal in regard to monetary changes, they might consider whether it was not possible to relieve the land from the rates which fell most heavily upon it. How were they met by the Chancellor of the Exchequer? "If you will divest yourselves of any idea of relief from the question of bimetallism, and if you will point out how the taxation necessary to relieve the rates is to be raised without affecting other people, then you can enter," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "on the work of your Committee with some prospect of success." He could only say to the Chancellor of the Exchequer "Thank you for nothing." One of the objections which they on that side of the House took to the appointment of the Commission at that time was that whenever they might attempt to raise the question of agricultural depression the fact that the Commission had been appointed would be thrown in their teeth, and it would furnish the Government with an excuse to do nothing for

the agricultural interest until the Commission had made its Report.

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, they were offered a Committee last summer, but (showing the amount of confidence the Government had in the proposition they were placing before the House) Members interested in this question were not given an hour during the whole of that Debate. At last, when the Committee was appointed, it was too late in the Session for any useful result to follow from its labours. Legislation on the important subject of agricultural depression should not be indefinitely postponed. Prices were never lower than at this moment in every branch of agriculture. Grain, mutton, beef, and other products were certainly lower than they were last year; and what farmers complained of was that their products were handicapped in the markets by the extraordinary railway rates. The efforts of the Government in regard to railway rates had not been successful, as the new rates were not one bit better than the old ones. He wanted to know what was the meaning of all this legislation foretold in the Queen's Speech. Was it really intended for the good of the country, or was it merely for Party purposes that all these sensational matters had been put into the Speech of Her Gracious Majesty? It was to be hoped, when the promised Committee was formed, that something tangible would come of it; that the Government would not run away from their guns, but would come up to the scratch and introduce some useful legislation upon this important subject, which should no longer be put off.

MR. MUNTZ (Warwickshire, Tamworth) said, the Leader of the House had attempted to draw a red herring across their path by talking about Protection and Free Trade. It was not a question of Protection or Free Trade. That was not what they complained about on that side of the House. What they did complain about was that the Government had introduced into the Queen's Speech the promise that they would bring in at an early date various measures, all of them, in his opinion, relating to very trivial matters indeed when compared with those needed legislative reforms upon which, he con-

tended, the future prosperity of the country depended. So far as he could see, the Government intended to ignore altogether those great reforms which affected, not a class, but the material prosperity of the community as a whole. They had omitted altogether to recognise or mention the depression existing from which the labouring population and capitalists alike suffered so severely. Whatever considerations might influence the action of the Government in the future he gave his fellow-countrymen credit for possessing sufficient sagacity to recognise those who looked after their interests and those who failed to do so. Heroic remedies were not wanted for the depression in agriculture and commerce. What they required was to get higher prices for products—prices which would remunerate the capitalist and pay the labourer. Blame was not cast on the Government for not telling them how all this was to be brought about, but they were blameable for having altogether failed in the Queen's Speech to make any mention of the lamentable depression existing at present in both agriculture and trade.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said, that all the foreign countries which the President of the Board of Trade had pictured as being so distressed were gold standard countries, were countries which, instead of keeping their Mints open to both the precious metals as formerly, had excluded the use of one of them, and had so contracted the currency and forced down prices. If they wanted a remedy for the continuing and deepening depression, they must along with free ports have free Mints. The heavy agricultural depression which unhappily existed in this country to a degree which had left many parts of it not far from general bankruptcy extended not only to most of the European countries, but to our Colonies and to the United States, and the cause of the depression was the fall in prices, which fall was abundantly explained by the great rise in the value of that one commodity (gold) by which the prices of all the others were measured. Protection had never brought prosperity to agriculture, but the periods of agricultural prosperity in the past had always been periods of expanding currency;

while agricultural and industrial depression had always been coincident with contracting currency. Those countries which had by legislation, instead of keeping their Mints open as they used to be to both the precious metals, excluded one form of currency had contracted their currency and so forced down prices. The fall in prices swept away the employers' profit and led to loss of employment to the workmen and the depreciation of property which was now seen everywhere among individuals and nations. All those consequences followed naturally from the contraction of the currency. It was impossible at so late an hour to detain the House by going into this greatest of all questions now before the world, but he had ventured to point out the plain cause of the trouble and that the remedy for it was free Mints. People in this country had no objection to moneys of either gold or silver, and a free supply of both should be afforded.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) said, the Minister for Agriculture had asked for suggestions of remedies, and he would suggest as one remedy for the present agricultural depression that the President of the Board of Agriculture should try the effect of marking foreign and colonial meat imported into this country, so that people might get home-produced meat when they paid for it. He had quite lately heard of a butcher who professed to a customer that he did not sell frozen mutton, but who was subsequently proved to be a large purchaser of that commodity from a wholesale purveyor. Why not pass a measure analogous to the Merchandise Marks Act for the purpose of preventing the fraudulent sale of foreign meat as English? Remedial legislation on this subject was demanded unanimously by the farmers of the country, for there could not be the slightest doubt that when butchers were asked for home-grown beef and mutton, foreign or colonial meat was palmed off by them on the public. The fact was abundantly proved before the Commission which sat on the subject, and the practice was most unfair both to the public and the producer. The remedy he suggested was universally demanded by the farmers at every meeting they attended, and it

was high time some legislation should be passed on the subject.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 86 ;
Noes 192.—(Division List, No. 1.)

Main Question again proposed.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said, that before the Debate closed he desired to draw particular attention to one subject which he thought ought not to pass without some comment. Her Majesty's Speech proposed for the consideration of the House a great number of topics. There were six paragraphs in which notice was given of the introduction of large measures, several of which were likely to cause very prolonged discussion. Indeed, it was very doubtful whether many of them would come before Parliament in the form of Bills, and still more doubtful whether they would pass into law. He thought that when a subject was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne which deeply touched the interests of a great number of people, and created in the minds of those whose interests were attacked a sense of cruel wrong, it was most unjust that such a subject should be submitted in successive years and that Parliament should have no opportunity of dealing with it. He referred especially at that moment to the announcement that a measure would be introduced dealing with the Established Church in Scotland and in Wales. Preference in this case was given to Wales, and he did not suppose that his fellow-countrymen would feel any great amount of jealousy at the fact. He had no doubt that even an attack on the Church in Wales would cause a great deal of inconvenience to Her Majesty's Government. But it was intolerable that an Institution distinct in itself—so ancient, so venerable, and so useful as the Church of Scotland—should be menaced in successive years, apparently only with the effect and intention of disturbing the minds of the people and of satisfying pledges that had been given. It was well understood last Session what were the reasons for proposing the Disestablishment of the Church in Scotland. A certain number of votes had to be secured. He would not say there were 30 pieces of silver, but there were 30 votes or more to be got

by selling the Church. There was a certain Party to be conciliated and a certain number of votes to be procured for Home Rule by that means. The proposal of Disestablishment, however, was not a straightforward one. It was a means of delay and of paralyzing the operations of the Church in the parishes as they became successively vacant, preparing it, no doubt, for extinction in time to come, and in the meantime merely giving it a deadly wound. The proposal did not go further last Session than its announcement, and he did not know whether the Government expected to go any further with it this year. At all events, they had not indicated any such intention ; but he could tell them that when they gave notice of any Bill on the subject it would meet with determined opposition in its initial and every subsequent stage. Such a measure was not to be lightly introduced on the ground of mere political expediency and for the purpose of satisfying a certain number of votes. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War said "No, no !"

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon, I was merely speaking to my hon. Friend near me.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON said, that possibly the right hon. Gentleman was better engaged than in listening to him. But he would never accuse the right hon. Gentleman of such a motive. The right hon. Gentleman was a Scotchman himself, and he knew that in Scotland there were feelings on this subject as strong as he had described, and he was sure that if the right hon. Gentleman were dealing with the subject he would give it adequate consideration. For the maintenance of the Scottish Church he was not ashamed to quote the old argument that it was an integral part of the Treaty of Union. It was one of the conditions upon which Scotland surrendered its independent Parliament, and he was quoting the opinion of great men who had said that this compact could not be dissolved without the consent of the parties to the Treaty of Union. They had been met with the argument, which was hardly worthy of those who put it forward, that there had been an expression on the part of the Representatives of the majority of the

people of Scotland in favour of Disestablishment. Was there any expression of opinion in favour of Disestablishment by the people of Scotland at the last General Election? It was absolutely impossible for the Government with any consistency to pretend it. They quoted the majority of the Representatives of Scotland last Session in support of Home Rule; and if the majority of the Representatives of Scotland were elected last Session as advocates for Home Rule, the verdict of the Election was certainly not taken on the question of Disestablishment. It was impossible to quote this precious majority over and over again in support of every sort of fad and theory. He desired, with all seriousness and earnestness, to state his conviction of the deep sense of injustice that would be done to Scotland by a hurried decision on this question, and to protest against the assumption that the majority of the people of Scotland were in favour of this measure. The majority of the people of Scotland belonged to the Established Church. It was approved by a large majority of the people of Scotland, and it was perfectly certain that many members of the Non-conformist Bodies were entirely opposed to the disestablishment of the Church. It was certain, also, that the Roman Catholic Body was opposed to Disestablishment. The venerable Archbishop of St. Andrew's had stated that it would be a national misfortune if the Established Church were done away with, for—though he did not agree with its doctrines—he recognised that it formed a solid barrier against infidelity. Let the Government propose this measure by all means, but let them take the verdict of the people of Scotland upon it. The more the people of Scotland had brought home to them that the Government policy was to rob them of the endowments which they had enjoyed from time immemorial, the more they would revolt against such a robbery, and would show their sense of that injustice and of that spoliation by recording their votes in a sense most unfavourable to the Government that proposed it. The late Prime Minister knew something of the effect of a Disestablishment policy in Midlothian, for his majority, which in 1885 was 4,700, was in 1892 reduced to the odd-hundred, because of his support of

that policy. He believed that the attachment to the Old Church and to the cause of the national endowment of religion which had made itself felt in Midlothian would, if the opinion of the country were taken on the subject, be found to exist throughout the whole of Scotland. This was a matter which could not be lightly dealt with, and would not be lightly dealt with, so far as his influence and that of those who valued National Institutions extended. It was a matter which should be fought to the utmost, for it was bound up with the deepest interests of Scotland. It was one thing to disestablish a Church where it represented a small minority, as in Ireland, but it was very different in Scotland, where nine-tenths of the people were Presbyterians. It was impossible to rob the Church without ascertaining the sentiments of the people by some process more real than any the Government had attempted or contemplated. He thought it was monstrous that the Government should threaten this Church in successive years without stating their intentions in regard to it. "One Man One Vote" and similar questions were matters which might disturb them for a year or two, and which could be decided without touching the vital interests of the people; but the Christian Church was matter of another moment. To treat a Christian Church as if it was a matter of no moment or an ephemeral Institution that it might suit their convenience to maintain one day and do away with the next was unworthy of statesmen or those who had the best interests of the people at heart. The Government dare not test this question frankly and fully before the people of Scotland, because they knew that if they did they would be in a minority. They dared not test Home Rule in such a sense, still less dared they test the disestablishment of the Church. He could not believe that the Prime Minister could be so indifferent to the opinions of his country as to be careless about an Institution so important as the Church. He appealed to the House to set its face against this trifling with a great National Institution, for which the Scottish people had made such great sacrifices. The Scottish people were not a people who were deficient in sentiment, and they

Sir J. Fergusson

could show when they were deeply moved. Each year since this question had been mooted it had excited great attention, and he told the Government that if they were seriously menacing the Church of Scotland they would arouse in that country a feeling far deeper than they had ever experienced before. There were various ways in which the question of Disestablishment might be dealt with, but the worst way of all was by trifling with it, by proposing in the Queen's Speech a measure which they did not see their way to introduce. They knew they had no more chance of carrying Disestablishment in the present Session than they had of carrying Home Rule. Therefore, why should the Government parade the question in this way? He would remind the House that it was the fault of a British Government, of which the late Prime Minister was a Member, that the Church of Scotland was broken up, the ill-omened advice given to the Government of Sir Robert Peel to reject the strong desire of Scotland for liberty of choice as to ministers leading to the great disruption of 1843. It was this House which did the mischief then, and why should this House further illtreat that Church which it had so greatly wronged? At the present day there were great numbers of the descendants of those who struck for freedom in 1843 who would scorn to take part in any measure for the destruction of the National Establishment. The Government must be prepared, if they were now going to deal with the Church of Scotland, for an opposition as great as must be raised when so ancient an Institution, and one so vitally bound up with the history of Scotland, was attacked.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Lord R. Churchill.)*

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

Copy presented,—of Navy Estimates for the year 1894-5, with explanatory observations by the Financial Secretary and explanation of differences [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 5.]

NAVY (STATEMENT EXPLANATORY OF ESTIMATES).

Copy presented,—of Statement of First Lord of the Admiralty explanatory of the Navy Estimates, 1894-5 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (JUDICIAL RENTS).

Copy presented,—of Return of Judicial Rents fixed during the months of November and December, 1893 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1893-4).

Copy presented,—of Estimate of the further Amount that will be required during the year ending 31st March, 1894, to meet Expenditure not sufficiently provided for in the original Army Estimates for the year [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 2.]

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES). (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1893-4).

Copy presented,—of Estimate of the further Amount required during the year ending 31st March, 1894, for the Service of the Ordnance Factories [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 8.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

Copy presented,—of Army Estimates of Effective and Non-Effective Services for 1894-95, with Statement of the Variation of the number of Her Majesty's British Forces, the amounts included for the Colonies and Egypt, and the sums provided for each Arm of the Service and for various Miscellaneous Establishments [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 1.]

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES).

Copy presented,—of Estimate of Charge for the Ordnance Factories for the year 1894-5 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 9.]

ARMY (MEMORANDUM ON ESTIMATES).

Copy presented,—of Memorandum of the Secretary of State relating to the

Army Estimates for 1894-5 [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (VETERINARY DEPARTMENT).

Copy presented,—of Annual Report of the Director of the Veterinary Department for 1893, with Appendix [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (LEAFLETS).

Copy presented,—of Leaflets issued by the Board of Agriculture in the year 1893 [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHTHOUSES, &c. (LOCAL INSPECTIONS).

Copy presented,—of Reports to the Board of Trade by the Trinity House of Deptford Strond, the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, and the Commissioners of Irish Lights, of their inspections of local lighthouses, buoys, and beacons (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 128, of Session 1893) [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (PROVISIONAL ORDERS).

Copy presented,—of Report by the Board of Trade of their proceedings under "The General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861," and "The General Pier and Harbour Act (1861) Amendment Act" [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES, AND VACCINATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented,—of the Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Registrar General in Scotland for the year 1893 ; and Twenty-ninth Annual Report on Vaccination [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Copy presented,—of Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh for the year 1892-3 [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

BANK OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Copy presented,—of Draft of a Supplemental Charter for the Bank of British Columbia [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1893-4).

Copy presented,—of Estimate of the sums required to be voted for the Service of the year ending 31st March, 1894, in addition to the sums provided in the Estimates presented in the current year [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 4.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (ESTIMATES 1894-5).

Copy presented,—of Estimates for Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending 31st March, 1895 [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 3.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1894-5 (MEMORANDUM ON ESTIMATES).

Copy presented,—of Memorandum of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury relating to the Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1894-5 [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

WOOLWICH ARSENAL (INJURY PAY).

Return presented,—relative thereto [ordered 12th January, 1894 ; *Mr. Walter M'Laren*] ; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 22nd February 1894, declaring that William Matthey, Royal Gun Factory, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

TREASURY CHEST FUND.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 26th February, 1894, reducing the Balance of the Treasury Chest Fund from £1,000,000 to £700,000 [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.

Copy presented,—of Forty-sixth Report of the Commissioners with Appendix [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSION.

Copy presented,—of Forty-third Report from the Commissioners, for the year preceding 1st March, 1894 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (WARWICKSHIRE).

Copy presented,—of Order made by the County Council of Warwickshire constituting a new Polling District in the Northern or Tamworth Division of the County to be called the Olton Polling District [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—
(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

BALLOTING FOR BILLS.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to submit a question to the Government upon a matter concerning the rights of Members and the Business of the House. In the course of the evening I tendered to the Clerk Assistant at the Table a Notice showing that I desired my name should be included to-morrow in the Ballot for the introduction of Bills. The Clerk Assistant informed me that I should add to my name the title of the Bill I proposed to introduce. He does not appear to be aware of the unbroken practice of the House, almost from time immemorial, with regard to the Bills introduced on the first day of the Session. Several Members put down their names for the Ballot, but they do not state the title of their Bills until their names are drawn and read out in the House. Every Member of the House is interested in more than one Bill—he would be of very narrow sympathies and intelligence were it otherwise—and the effect of the settled rule and practice of the House is this: that if a Bill in which an hon. Member is concerned obtains a place, his name is called, and he could give notice of another Bill. But under the new system and the somewhat irregular manner in which it was introduced to-night many Members may give notice of the same Bill, and when an hon. Member is called upon and fixes a day for the Second Reading of that Bill, all the other

Members who are drawn lose their days. That is a fundamental change in the rights of Members of the House. That is a change that can only be accomplished by a ruling of the House. The matter has already been considered by two Committees of the House, and these Committees held that the procedure with regard to the introduction of Bills could only be disposed of by an Order of the House itself, and they recommended that the matter was one which the House only should deal with. I believe this proceeding on the part of the Clerk Assistant has been taken in pursuance of a proposal or a scheme put forward by Mr. Speaker upon his sole authority. When Mr. Speaker made the proposal I respectfully stated that the alteration ought to be made by a vote of the House itself, and pointed out to him that under the proposed new system if 20 Members gave notice of the same Bill 19 of them would find when their names were called that they had lost their chance at the Ballot. The action of the Assistant Clerk would have the effect of depriving us of the chance of the Ballot this year. Many of my hon. Friends near me handed in Notices at the Table to-night, but the Assistant Clerk returned some of them and said that he would give the others to some servants of the House to be disposed of in some other manner.

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! It is now 12 o'clock, and the Motion has lapsed.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—
(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): On a point of Order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do I understand that my hon. Friend the Member for Kerry is out of Order?

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No; but when it is 12 o'clock it is my duty to call attention to the fact that a Motion for Adjournment lapses. Since 12 o'clock this Motion has been made again, and the hon. Gentleman is now in Order.

MR. SEXTON: I wish to ask, Sir, in virtue of what authority has this change been made? There are Standing Orders concerning the introduction of

Bills. If the Standing Orders are not adequate let them be altered by a vote of the House. The powers of Mr. Speaker are already large enough, and I, for one, shall not consent that the rights of Members shall be altered in the manner proposed. The only information I was able to obtain on the matter is contained in a Blue Paper which is available in the Vote Office. It states—

“Ballot for the introduction of Bills. Mr. Speaker proposes to save the time of the House,”

and then follows a description of his scheme. It is clear that the whole scheme on which the Clerks are proceeding is the scheme of Mr. Speaker. I protest against any alteration in the procedure or any limitation of the rights of Members of the House at the pleasure or at the suggestion of any functionary, however high or capable he may be, and I acknowledge at once the capability of Mr. Speaker. I hold, and I think my hon. Friends will hold, that any Bill proceeded with in this House, not in virtue of a Standing Order, but in virtue of a suggestion or proposal of Mr. Speaker, is an invalid Bill. We shall take occasion to press that view on the House, and we shall take occasion to invite the opinion of the House that Mr. Speaker is not entitled to interfere with the rights of Members in this way. That can only be done by a vote of the House. I wish to ask the Leader of the House whether the Government have sanctioned this proceeding, and in what mode they intend to submit the action of Mr. Speaker to the judgment of the House?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am sure that the House will not desire this question to be decided in the absence of Mr. Speaker, whose indisposition we all regret. So far as my own knowledge of this matter goes, it is very limited. I remember a question being put to Mr. Speaker in the House on the subject, and it was put on the ground of the convenience of the House. I did not understand Mr. Speaker to lay down any new Rule upon the subject at all. Some observations were made about the practice which has grown up, about which there is a variety of opinion—that is to say, a combination of a number of gentlemen who desire to obtain precedence for

particular Bills. I confess that I have never objected to that practice, because it secures Bills in which a large number of hon. Members are interested being introduced. For present purposes, however, the only question seems to me to be to inquire what is the lawful practice according to the established Rules, and that we cannot properly do in the absence of Mr. Speaker. I am satisfied that Mr. Speaker will tell us on his return that he had no desire to alter the Rules of the House except at the expressed wish of the House. As to whether the alteration is within the Rules of the House, I do not venture an opinion. Certainly my own view would be in accordance with that of the hon. Member opposite. In the old days, perhaps, combinations among Members did not exist, but I fail to see how the existence of such combinations could alter the law on the subject. Undoubtedly up to now an hon. Member was not called upon to name his Bill until he had ballotted. On the whole, however, I think that hon. Members will agree with me that it will be better to wait until the return of Mr. Speaker before we proceed to discuss the matter further.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the advice that has been given to the House by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, that we should wait until the return of Mr. Speaker before discussing this question further, is wise and sound. We can hardly decide in the absence of Mr. Speaker what would be the proper course to be taken with regard to a modification of the Rules of the House. I may say, however, that this matter was brought under the attention of Mr. Speaker on a former occasion. No doubt great inconvenience and waste of time prevailed under the old system of balloting, and it was suggested that the balloting should take place in a Committee Room upstairs. The hon. Member for Kerry at the time pointed out that if this plan were carried into effect the result would be that the combinations of which the hon. Gentleman has spoken would be impossible. Mr. Speaker's reply was that that practice was not in accordance with the ancient usages of the House.

MR. SEXTON: I also pointed out that, apart from the combination, if an

hon. Member put down his name for a particular Bill, and if another Member, who put down that Bill also was first called, the second Member would find that his day would be lost.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I had forgotten that the hon. Gentleman had made that additional point, but I am sure he will agree that his objection was based substantially on the ground that the proposed alteration would prevent those combinations which we have known during the last few years. Mr. Speaker remarked that the practice which the hon. Member for North Kerry said would be imperilled was not a practice in accordance with the ancient usages of this House. When the Leader of the House holds that there is much to be said in favour of a plan which gives precedence to Bills in which a large number of Members are interested, the question arises whether that which is so held to be desirable is attained in the best way by these loose methods of organisation which give an advantage to those who are organised as against those who are not so organised. That is a matter which can be debated if it comes up for discussion. But it would be better to defer the discussion till we have Mr. Speaker in the Chair. The sole object Mr. Speaker has in view is the convenience of the House, and he can have no desire to run counter to the traditions which have hitherto regulated our proceedings.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester was not going to include the Irish Party in those "cruel organisations" which had been referred to in another place. He very much regretted the cause of Mr. Speaker's absence, but with very great respect to him he would submit that this was a matter with which Mr. Speaker had nothing whatever to do. Mr. Speaker had no more authority to alter the law of Parliament than the humblest Member who sat in it. In 1886 he made a proposal in connection with the introduction of Bills that the practice of calling a Member before the Bar of the House, and the Member walking, bowing, up the floor of the House, should be abolished, and he was told that that practice could not be dispensed with without a Standing Order.

If they could not dispense with bowing and scraping without a Standing Order, how could they abrogate the rights of Members, which was practically what the new Rule would do? The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had suggested that they should wait for the return of Mr. Speaker, which he hoped would be speedy. He would agree to that if the Ballot was postponed in the meantime. He would say for himself that, in his judgment, whenever the Liberal Party were in Office there was a constant tendency of officials to make proposals affecting Irish Members which they would not dare to make when the Tories were in power. The officials relied upon their acquiescence or silence, or something of that kind when the Liberals were in Office, but when the Tories were in Office they never attempted it. This was a question which affected the Irish Members in a most vital degree. They were only 80 at most, while the other Parties in the House were each about 300 strong. It was hinted that they were highly organised. Was it their fault that if the other Parties in the House, who had a Government of their own countrymen, and were present on the spot in their own land, and were rich and well equipped, were badly organised that the Irish Party were to be denied the use of the only method by which through 10 or 15 years they had advanced their cause? The proposal was put forward, forsooth, to save the time of the House. Nobody was more anxious to save the time of the House than he was, and he was willing to admit that the system of having the Ballot in the House might perhaps be altered; but he would submit that no more loose or irregular way of altering the law of Parliament had ever been attempted than the way that was taken in the present instance. The document setting forth the change was not even signed by Mr. Speaker. It said that "Mr. Speaker proposes." Mr. Speaker had no power of proposal, and he was quite sure that if Mr. Speaker, who had so often extended his protection to Irish Members, knew how strong a feeling was created by the matter, he would be the last person in the world to enforce it in that way. It might do to give Mr. Speaker power

to make a change where all Parties acquiesced; but if there was any objection to the proposal, and Mr. Speaker was allowed to make the change, it would be reducing him to the position of the American Speaker, who was merely a member of a Party organisation, which it was most undesirable he should be. He felt glad that the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his first night as Leader of the House had thrown out amicable proposals. His hon. Friends would never have taken up the time of the House if they had been received in a proper spirit; but they were told by the Clerks at the Table that their notices were waste paper, and that they would be given to the servants of the House. That was not the way to treat a body of 80 men, and their protest was made in a respectful, formal, and Parliamentary manner. It had been so received by the Government, and he was sure that had Mr. Speaker been in the Chair he would have been the first to recognise this. He thanked Mr. Deputy Speaker for the opportunity he had afforded them to debate this matter, and he was sure that a change could be made which would accommodate the general views prevailing in that and every quarter of the House.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, they ought to have it made quite clear whether the Ballot was to be postponed or not.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Unquestionably the arrangement suggested was for the convenience of the House, but it has given rise to some misunderstanding. Of course, the taking of the Ballot outside the House is a departure from the Rules; but it is acquiesced in for convenience, and with no intention on the part of anyone to deprive any Member of the rights he possesses. The only solution I can see is to revert to the Ballot in the House, and to abandon this particular method against which complaint has been made. I will therefore suggest that it might be better to take the Ballot on Thursday. I believe that this will remove the difficulty, though I should have preferred to see Mr. Speaker present, in order that he might render the House his assistance.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I ask the Government to take into consideration the fact that a large number of my hon. Friends have gone home. I think the

right hon. Gentleman should at least give ample notice to all those who are concerned, so that those hon. Members who have accepted the procedure provided by Mr. Speaker should not find themselves aggrieved.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think that the best way would be for the subject to be mentioned again before Public Business to-morrow, when every hon. Member will have an opportunity of considering the question. It will be necessary to propose a Motion to this effect:—

“That no Notice for Leave to bring in Bills shall be handed in before Thursday next,”

because otherwise the ancient right of Members to move Notices of Bills would arise to-morrow, and cut out any people who were not in the House.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked whether the Notices already handed in had been rejected?

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: They were rejected, but I understand that they were kept.

MR. SEXTON: Mine was not kept; it was given back to me.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Mine was not kept, because it was rejected at the Table.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Ballot took place outside the House subject to the new Rule, but the whole matter can come up on the Notice of Motion to-morrow, and be discussed. I may also take occasion to say that I will propose a Motion to suspend the Twelve o’Clock Rule to-morrow night in the hope that, if the House is so disposed, it may finish the Debate on the Address.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.) said, he had handed in a Notice at the Table of a Bill for the amendment of the Labourers (Ireland) Act with regard to allotments, a matter which he had been prosecuting for a couple of years. He had handed in that Notice in the usual form; but he was told that it was absolutely out of Order, and that he would have to go out and alter it before it could be accepted at the Table. He should say that he never felt so insulted in all his life.

Question put, and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly at half after Twelve o’clock.

Mr. T. M. Healy

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 13th March 1894.

COPYHOLD CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.].

Bill to consolidate the Copyhold Acts—presented (The Lord Chancellor); read 1st. (No. 2.)

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (PROCEDURE) BILL [H.L.].

Bill to amend the Supreme Court of Judicature Acts—presented (The Lord Chancellor); read 1st. (No. 3.)

QUARTER SESSIONS (MIDSUMMER) BILL [H.L.].

Bill for amending the Law with respect to the time for holding Midsummer Quarter Sessions—presented (The Lord Chancellor); read 1st. (No. 4.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBURY): My Lords, I promised to say a word about the course of Public Business this evening. I understand that for Private Bill purposes it is necessary that the House should meet on Thursday. Then I think we might meet again on Monday, and then I shall be prepared to make a statement as to the Easter Holidays.

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 13th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition:—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

VOL. XXII. [FOURTH SERIES.]

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

For Cambridgeshire (Northern or Wisbech Division), *v.* The Hon. Arthur George Brand, Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household.

Hawick District of Burghs, *v.* Thomas Shaw, esquire, Solicitor General for Scotland.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAY RATES BILL.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is his intention, and, if so, when, to bring in a Bill to ameliorate the condition of the agricultural and trading classes so far as it is affected by the imposition of unreasonable railway rates and charges?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): A Bill to carry into effect the recommendations of the Select Committee on Railway Rates and Charges has been prepared, and no time will be lost in introducing it.

POST OFFICE EXPRESS MESSENGER SERVICE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Post Office Express Messenger Service pays its expenses or is conducted at a loss; whether he can give the statistics of the amount received for messages for one year; and whether he can approximately estimate the amount expended in wages for messengers and printing for the Service?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I regret I am unable to supply the hon. Member with the information he desires, as the Post Office Express Delivery Service is conducted by the ordinary staff at the disposal of the Department who are concurrently employed on other work. I am informed, however, that there is good reason to believe that the charges made to the public cover the expense of the Service. I am not able to say what the additional cost has been for printing for this particular purpose, as it is included in the general Vote for stationery, but it would be scarcely appreciable.

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An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the member.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
IRISH LAND ACTS.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when he proposes to nominate the Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Acts?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I hope to lay the names on the Table either to-morrow or Thursday.

MERCANTILE MARINE EXPENDITURE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state in what portion of the Estimates, and under what head, the expenditure for lighthouse maintenance, mercantile marine offices, casualty returns, chain cables, saving life, relief of distressed seamen abroad, boiler explosions, pensions, and interest, which amounted together in the year ending 31st March, 1893, to £637,034, will be shown; by what clause, if any, of the Appropriation Act the application of this sum to these Services is sanctioned; and if these items of expenditure are nowhere shown in the Estimates, whether he proposes in any, and, if so, what, manner to submit the details of items involving so large an expenditure of public money to the control of this House?

MR. MUNDELLA: These expenses come out of the Mercantile Marine Fund, the greater portion of which is not voted, and therefore does not appear in the Estimates. The portion which is voted (£50,000 last year) is included in the Estimates under Mercantile Marine Fund (Grant in Aid) Class II., Vote 17, and the application of this sum is sanctioned by Clause 111 of the Appropriation Act. The whole of the expenditure out of the Mercantile Marine Fund is reported on by the Comptroller and Auditor General in the Appropriation Account which is presented to Parliament, so that details of the items involved in the expenditure referred to come before Parliament.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will it be competent for us to discuss this expenditure on any Vote whatsoever?

MR. MUNDELLA: I am unable to answer that question without notice.

OIL FUEL.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the statement in *The Daily Telegraph* of 22nd February, that the British steamer *Baku Standard* had arrived at Philadelphia after having crossed the Atlantic propelled by steam generated from oil fuel alone; whether any experiments are now being carried out with a view to ascertaining the adaptability of oil fuel to Her Majesty's ships; and whether he can now state what conclusion the Admiralty have arrived at with regard to the use of this fuel?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): Nothing is known at the Admiralty of the statement to which the hon. Gentleman refers. No experiments with oil fuel are now going on in Her Majesty's ships; nor have any new conclusions been arrived at by the Admiralty on the subject since my answers to the hon. Member's previous questions.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Does the right hon. Baronet propose to introduce any experiments, or to pay any attention whatever to this matter?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I informed the hon. Member on the 11th of September that oil fuel had frequently been experimented with, both in foreign countries and at home, and that the Admiralty were closely watching the results.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: What conclusion has been arrived at?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No new conclusions have been arrived at.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: No conclusion at all?

[No answer was given.]

THE MADRAS AND BOMBAY COMMANDS.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Home Government have declined to sanction the proposals of the Government of India consequent upon the passing of the Madras and Bombay Commands Act, such for example as those for placing

Burma under Bengal, rather than leaving it under the officer commanding at Madras, and for placing Quetta under the Commander of the Punjab corps, instead of under the Commander at Bombay? In putting the question may I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his appointment as a Secretary of State.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Secretary of State in Council declined to sanction the most recent proposals of the Government of India on certain points; but as this matter is at the present moment the subject of correspondence with the Government of India I do not consider it advisable in the public interest to make any statement on the subject.

FRAUDS IN THE MEAT TRADE.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has received Memorials from the Ythanside Farmers Club and other Agricultural Societies on the north east of Scotland with regard to the sale of foreign meat; and whether he will be able, by legislation or otherwise, to prevent the fraudulent practices that at present prevail and cause loss to agriculturists?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I have received the Memorials to which my hon. Friend refers, and have communicated copies of them to my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, by whom the matter must necessarily be considered, and without whose concurrence it would not be possible for me to make any proposals on the subject. With regard to the second question of my hon. Friend, I cannot at present add anything to what my right hon. Friend and myself have recently said in reply to the previous questions which have been addressed to us; but I may perhaps say that what I then stated as to the sufficiency of the existing law to prevent malpractices has been corroborated by the important convictions which have recently taken place under the Merchandise Marks Acts.

UGANDA.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in

view of the promise by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of an early discussion upon Uganda, when the Report by the late Sir Gerald Portal will be presented to Parliament?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): It has been intended to lay this Report on the Table before the Supplementary Estimate was taken. I am afraid this will hardly be possible now; but, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated, an opportunity will be given for discussing the decision of the Government with regard to Uganda soon after Easter, and the Report of Sir G. Portal will be distributed before that takes place.

HAMILTON BRIGADE DEPÔT.

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that there is a double brigade depôt at Hamilton, where the barrack accommodation is understood to be unsatisfactory, he can see his way to transfer these depôts, or at least one of these depôts, to Lanark?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The barracks at Hamilton were arranged for the accommodation of a double brigade depôt at considerable expense, in connection with the localisation scheme of 1872. They meet military requirements. The Militia barracks at Lanark are not suitable for occupation by a regimental depôt, and to make them so would involve heavy expenditure. Under the circumstances, the change referred to in the question is not contemplated.

PAROCHIAL GRANTS FOR SCOTLAND.

MR. HOZIER: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, with reference to his answer of the 20th March, 1893, whether the Parochial Boards of Scotland will receive the Equivalent Grant for 1893-4 before the 14th May, 1894?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (SIR G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I am glad to inform the hon. Member that the contribution he refers to will be paid over to the Parochial Boards by the 14th May next.

TRALEE AND DINGLE RAILWAY.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to a recent statement of Mr. Justice O'Brien, at the County Kerry Spring Assizes, in which he stated, with reference to the Tralee and Dingle Railway, and in connection with the taxation which it has brought upon the guaranteeing baronies, that it was his strong opinion that the County Kerry ratepayers were not responsible for what has caused this rate—namely, the Camp Bridge accident ; that it was quite clear that either from defective inspection of the Board of Trade, or from want of proper vigilance in the supervision of the construction of the line, the great loss (*i.e.* the Camp Bridge accident) had fallen upon the county ; that it was certainly a terrible thing to think of the great burden this rate had cast upon the barony through which this railway passes, to be levied upon the humblest class of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits in this county ; and that, if a change is to be made in this railway, it has occurred to him to suggest that certainly the damages, which are the subject of this presentment, might reasonably be met by the Government ; if the Chief Secretary is aware that the district through which this railway runs is scheduled as a “congested district ;” and whether, in view of the exceptional nature of the case, he will advise the Treasury to grant a loan of £5,000 to the County Kerry Grand Jury, repayable in half-yearly instalments, to meet the charge for the damages of the Camp Bridge accident, and which must otherwise be levied in a tax of 5s. in the £1 upon one of the poorest communities in the whole of Ireland ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I am advised that the County Kerry Grand Jury have no power to borrow, nor the Treasury to lend, money for the purpose in question. I, however, fully sympathise with the inhabitants of the district, an admittedly poor one, on whom an unexpected burden has been thrown through the railway accident referred to, and I will communicate with the hon. Baronet for certain particulars, with a view to further considering whether any action is practicable to lighten that burden.

Sir G. Trevelyan

THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE SOFAS.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reference to the recent expedition against the Sofas, whether the Colonial Office in November last had information not possessed by the Governor when he judged it sufficient to send a pacific mission of inquiry ; if so, whether this information can be communicated to the House, or was there any other reason for over-ruling the decision of the Governor ?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (MR. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) : My hon. Friend's inquiry was practically answered by me on February 16 in reply to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for South-East Lancashire, and I must refer him to that answer. I can only add that, while allowance is made for the fact that the Governor had but recently returned to the colony after leave of absence, he did not appear to fully appreciate the facts of the case. Her Majesty's Government were satisfied as to the atrocities committed by the Sofas and the necessity of their prompt punishment—an opinion which has been amply justified by the facts reported in the published Despatches of the gallant officer commanding the expedition, whose subsequent death, owing to the hardships of the campaign, is greatly deplored by Her Majesty's Government.

TRAWLING OFF STROMNESS.

SIR L. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland) : I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been directed to a recent case of trawling near Stromness, in Orkney, in which the trawler *Ceylon* of Grimsby, Blackburn master, was seen by several witnesses trawling within the three mile limit on the 26th of December last ; whether it is true that a prosecution was instituted and Blackburn cited to appear in Aberdeen, but that he was liberated without caution, and that since then the prosecution has been abandoned by advice of Crown Counsel ; whether it is true that in the same case Blackburn was cited to appear at Kirkwall for not showing lights on his vessel when moving in inland waters, and whether the prosecution in this case was not also with-

drawn; and for what reasons did the Crown Counsel advise the withdrawal of the prosecution in each of the above cases?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): When the proceeding first mentioned in the question was raised, it was not known that Blackburn had a residence in Scotland, and consequently a warrant was granted for his apprehension upon his appearing at a Scotch port. Upon this warrant he was sometime after apprehended at Aberdeen, and apparently lodged in prison there. He then presented to the Court of Justiciary a Bill of Suspension and Liberation, and upon that application a warrant for his interim liberation was granted by one of the Judges of that Court. It was stated in his application, and appears to have been the fact, that he had a residence in Aberdeen, and if this had been known he would have been cited to appear for trial and not apprehended. The proceeding second mentioned was instituted about two months after the date of the alleged offence, which was said to have been committed on the same occasion as that charged in the first proceeding, and it was represented on the part of Blackburn that this delay would place him at a serious disadvantage in conducting his defence, as his crew were scattered. Seeing that a harsher step—namely, that of apprehension, had been adopted against Blackburn than would have been taken if it had been known that he had a residence in Aberdeen, and looking to the prejudice which it was alleged that he would suffer from the delay in instituting the second proceeding, it was thought by Crown Counsel better not to carry the case further. There is, however, every intention to enforce strictly the law against illegal trawling.

MR. BUCHANAN: Has the attention of my right hon. Friend been directed to the very strong language used by the Sheriff Substitute on this occasion? He said there had been an open and impudent violation of the law. Did he not give expression to his strong dissent relative to the action of the Crown Counsel? May I further ask whether, in view of this statement by a responsible Judge, my right hon. Friend will take steps to have the man tried for the alleged offence in due legal form?

***MR. J. B. BALFOUR:** I saw a report that the Sheriff Substitute had used some such expressions, but whether he was then aware of the whole circumstances of the case and of the action of the High Court of Justiciary I cannot say.

“WARNED” SCHOOLS.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will assent to a Return giving the names of schools warned during the year ending 31st December, 1893, and specifying the reasons for which they have been warned?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): If the noble Lord will move for a Return in continuation of No. 277 of 1893 for the year ending 31st August, 1893, I can give it him, though I am afraid it will involve much trouble in the Statistical Department of the Education Office, and cannot be ready for a considerable time. A Return giving the information asked for has been drawn up for the four months from 1st September to 31st December, 1893, of which I shall be glad to hand a copy to the noble Lord. It is proposed to continue similar Returns every three months, for the future.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I am very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his offer, but the Return for which I ask is one showing the matters in regard to which the Department has exercised coercive jurisdiction both as to curriculum and to building arrangements. This action has aroused a good deal of strong feeling in the country, and I therefore wish to know if he is inclined to give these particulars.

MR. ACLAND: The “warning” to which the question refers is with regard to educational matters pure and simple. I will consider whether in cases in which the Department has required alterations in buildings special Returns can be made. It may be possible perhaps to pick out a few cases.

SWAZILAND.

BARON H. DE WORMS (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies when the final cession of Swaziland to the

Transvaal Government will take place; and whether he will state the nature of the provisions for the security of the native population after the withdrawal of the British and Native Representatives, and present further Papers on the subject?

MR. S. BUXTON: The provisions for the security of the native population of Swaziland are contained in the Convention which has already been laid before the House; the Convention has, however, not yet been ratified by the Volksraad of the South African Republic. The arrangement, authorised and indicated under the Convention, between the South African Republic and the Swazi nation is now being negotiated. This arrangement is subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Government. I would remark, in regard to the first part of the question, that there is no question of "the cession of Swaziland"; Swaziland is not ours to cede; and it is not to be incorporated into the South African Republic.

MATABELELAND.

BARON H. DE WORMS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will state the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Matabeleland, and present Papers on the subject?

MR. S. BUXTON: The political settlement of Matabeleland is not yet complete. We had hoped to be able to include it in the new Blue Book, but this has not been possible, and the Papers relating to the matter will be laid on the Table at the earliest possible moment. If, however, opportunity serves, I will endeavour to state broadly the proposed terms of the settlement when the Supplementary Estimate is taken on Thursday.

THE FATAL ACCIDENT TO MR. THEOBALD, M.P.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if, in view of the numerous accidents and the one lately causing the death of the Member for the Romford Division, he is prepared to require the Railway Companies to fit their station platforms to the carriage steps, in which case such an accident as the last named would be impossible?

Baron H. De Worms

MR. MUNDELLA: By the Board of Trade Regulations

"as little space as possible is to be left between the edges of the platforms and those of the footboards on the carriages."

These Regulations, however, only apply to new stations and old stations at which new works are carried out. We have no power to enforce these Regulations in the case of old stations, but the attention of the Railway Company has been called to this sad case, and I have no doubt they will make the necessary alteration at Romford. I need not say we all deplore the lamentable accident to the hon. Member for that Division.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Has not the right hon. Gentleman a good deal of power of gentle persuasion which might be exercised on the Railway Companies?

MR. MUNDELLA: We are constantly exercising our power of persuasion on the Railway Companies, but we have no power to enforce the alterations desired when the platforms have reached a certain age.

OUGHTERARD RAILWAY.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when will the railway to Oughterard be opened; and how many men from the County of Galway are now employed on the Galway and Clifden Railway works?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The latest information in my possession shows that 1,285 men are now employed on the Galway and Clifden Railway, and that it is hoped that the entire length of it will be ready for opening about September 1 next.

SWINE FEVER IN IRELAND.

COLONEL NOLAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if any of the money now paid for the slaughter of pigs under the Swine Fever Act falls on the ratepayer; and, if so, how much?

MR. J. MORLEY: No part of the money now paid for the slaughter of pigs under the Swine Fever Act falls on the ratepayer. The entire expense is paid out of the cattle pleuro-pneumonia account from moneys provided by Parliament. Local funds will not be called upon to bear any portion of the cost unless in any future financial year the

money standing to the credit of the cattle pleuro-pneumonia account, including the proceeds of the sales of carcasses, is insufficient to defray the expenses.

THE WRECK OF THE "HONDEKLIP."

MR. SWEETMAN (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether there will be a Board of Trade inquiry into the recent loss of the brig *Hondeklip* on the Goodwin Sands, whereby five seamen lost their lives; whether he is aware that there is dissatisfaction in Arklow (to which port the five sailors whose lives were lost belonged) about the action and competency of the person acting as captain; and what certificate John Tyrrell held, and what was its date?

MR. MUNDELLA: My attention has been called to the case referred to in the question. A Court of Inquiry would have no power to punish the master even if he was in default, as he did not hold, and was not required by law to hold, a certificate. Under these circumstances, it is not proposed to hold an inquiry; and I am advised that there is no evidence to justify criminal proceedings in the case.

CLOSE TIME FOR WILD BIRDS IN YORKSHIRE.

MR. WILSON-TODD (York, N.R., Howdenshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department is he aware that the close time for wild birds on the Yorkshire side of the Humber commences on the 1st of March in each year, whereas on the Lincolnshire side it does not commence till the 15th of March; and if he will take steps to remove what the residents on the Yorkshire side of the Humber feel to be an injustice and a great grievance to them by so adjusting the close time that it shall commence on the same day in every year on both sides of the Humber?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I am aware of the difference that exists in the close time for wild birds on the two sides of the River Humber, and the matter has been frequently considered at the Home Office. I have no power under the Wild Birds Protection Act, 1880, to vary the close time for any portion of a county, but any extension authorised by me must operate throughout the whole county. The ques-

tion of altering such time generally in Yorkshire to March 15 has been carefully considered on several occasions by my predecessor and by myself, and I have declined to make any alteration in this respect. Whether the time should be altered in Lincolnshire is another matter, and one in which I have no authority to interfere until applied to by the County Authorities.

THE IMPRISONMENT OF CHILDREN.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is true that a child, six years old, has recently been confined in Holloway Prison; and, if so, by whom, and under what circumstances, was he committed?

MR. ASQUITH: Under the directions of the Secretary of State, issued in 1880, and still in force, that a Report should be made to the Home Office in all cases of the committal to prison of children under 14 years of age, the Governor of Holloway Prison reported to the Home Office on March 7 that William Williams, aged seven, with James Williams, aged 12, and James Stitchman, aged 13, had on that day been remanded to his custody, upon a charge of stealing lead piping, by the Magistrates of the Bromley Petty Sessional Division sitting at Beckenham. He added that the medical officer had taken this child and his brother, James Williams, into the infirmary for the night, and that they would sleep in the association ward. A telegram was despatched from the Home Office immediately on receipt of this Report on March 8 to the Magistrates urging them to consider the question of the immediate release of these children on bail, pointing out that a child of seven was quite unfit for detention in prison, and saying that if no one could be found to become bail a police officer should be instructed, and he would be held harmless. The Magistrates thereupon released the younger Williams at once upon his father's recognizance; and further inquiry was made by the Home Office as to the ages of the other two and the reasons why they were not remanded upon bail.

MR. PICTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in some countries no child under 12 years of age is sent to

prison on any account; and will he advise some alteration of the law which would prevent Magistrates sending children under 12 to prison on any pretence whatever?

MR. ASQUITH: When my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was at the Home Office he issued a Circular which had the effect of largely diminishing the number of children sent to gaol, and I will see, as far as I can, that Magistrates act up to the spirit of that Circular.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1894.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, having regard to the great importance of and interest felt in "The Local Government Act, 1894," he can expedite its issue by the Queen's Printers, and also arrange to have a sufficient supply of copies in the Vote or Sale Office to meet the requirements of Members?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Local Government Act was issued on Friday last. As the result of my inquiries of the Controller of the Stationery Office, I understand that there is now no difficulty in obtaining copies of the Act either by the public or by Members. The sale agents have a large number of copies, and there is an ample stock at the Sale Office.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Perhaps my right hon. Friend is not aware there is no copy in the Library.

EIGHT HOURS DAY IN GOVERNMENT FACTORIES.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War at what Government Factories the system of an eight hours day is now in force, and to what departments of those factories it does not apply; whether any, and if so what, alterations have been made as to limiting the usual times of grace, reducing the rate of pay for overtime, and abolishing pay altogether on Government holidays and other days for which wages have hitherto been paid; what reductions have been made in the system of sick pay; and whether any addition has been made to the piecework rate?

Mr. Picton

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to wait until Friday, when the Army Estimates come on, and I will then give him full information on the subject.

MR. HANBURY: Will the Ordnance Factory Vote be taken with the Army Votes?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It always goes with them.

"THE TRUSTEES ACT, 1893," IN IRELAND.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether Section 41 of "The Trustees Act, 1893," confers a more extensive power on the High Court in England than is vested in the High Court in Ireland, by expressly enabling the former to make vesting orders in respect of property in Ireland, while no corresponding power is conferred on the High Court in Ireland of making vesting orders in respect of property in England; and if the Government will facilitate the passing of a Bill to abolish this distinction between the relative powers of the two Courts?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (SIR C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): The fact is as stated in the first part of the question. But I would remind the hon. and learned Member that the Act of 1893 was a consolidating Act only, and that the provision in question is to be found in the Act of 1850 and in earlier Acts. I have, however, consulted the Lord Chancellor. He sees no reason why the High Court in Ireland should not have a similar power to that possessed by the High Court in England, and if the hon. Member will bring in a Bill on the subject the Government will be prepared fairly to consider it.

APPROPRIATIONS IN AID.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, dated 15th January, 1894, wherein it is stated that, through the action of the Treasury under "The Public Accounts and Charges Act, 1891," the sum of £8,295,014, consisting of extra receipts, was treated as appropriations in aid, and was applied to the Public Service, without having been granted

and appropriated thereto by "The Appropriation Act, 1892"; and whether he proposes, in the forthcoming Appropriation Act, to give any more formal and distinct Parliamentary sanction for the application of the appropriations in aid, as is suggested by the Auditor General; and, if not, whether he proposes to adopt any other method which will secure that so large a portion of the Public Revenue as is represented by the appropriations in aid, including the extra receipts, shall be granted and appropriated to the Public Service by Parliament instead of by Treasury Minute?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): This is a matter which will, in due course, come before the Public Accounts Committee. Pending the Report of that Committee, I cannot express any opinion on the point raised.

CONTRACTS FOR INDIAN STATE RAILWAYS.

SIR A. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether Les Usines and Fonderies De Baume and Marpent Company, Limited, of Belgium, have supplied 10,000 axle boxes to the Indian State Railways; and whether he will use his influence with the Department to induce them in future to procure their supplies of such articles in this country?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: So far as I have been able to ascertain, no order for axle boxes for Indian State Railways has been given to the Belgian Company mentioned in the first part of the hon. Member's question. As regards the latter part of it, I am informed that according to the existing practice of the Department a general preference is, for business reasons, always given to firms in this country.

REPORT ON BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS.

MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): In the absence of the hon. Member for the St. Patrick's Division of Dublin, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Report of the Bovine Tuberculosis Committee is ready, or when it may be expected?

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: In reply to my inquiry, I am informed that the work of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis is being proceeded with

with all possible speed, and that it is hoped that the Report will be issued shortly.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' DAYS.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: On a matter of great interest to private Members may I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what arrangements he proposes to make with regard to private Members' days after Easter. Many Members are balloting for places, and in the present abnormal situation they are entitled to know on what days they may put down their Bills; or whether the Government propose to take all the time after Easter as well as before?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am afraid I am not in a position to make any statement at present as to the time of the House after Easter. I can only offer to the noble Lord the old maxim, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Do we understand, then, that the Government contemplate having the same abnormal arrangements after as before Easter?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The hon. Member must not assume anything.

THE WALTHAM INQUIRY.

MR. HANBURY: I should like to ask the Secretary of State for War when the Report on the Waltham inquiry, which the right hon. Gentleman promised would be circulated before the Ordnance Factory Vote was taken, will be published; whether it is part of the arrangement that the Ordnance Vote shall be taken along with the Army Votes; and whether it is at all necessary that the Ordnance Factory Vote should be taken now?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes, Sir; I understand that, in the opinion of the Public Accounts Committee and the Treasury, it is necessary, or, at all events, desirable in strict regularity, that the Ordnance Factory Vote should be taken before the conclusion of the financial year. With regard to the Report of the inquiry mentioned, I am sorry to say the inquiry has taken longer than was anticipated. The Report is now almost complete, but I am afraid it cannot be in the hands of Members before Friday next. Every step will be taken to expedite its production.

MR. HANBURY : Seeing that the Report raises the whole question of the management of the factories, and as there is no urgent necessity in the matter, may I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman not to bring on the Vote on Friday.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I have just stated a reason why there is an urgent necessity to take the Vote. It is not any desire of mine to take it this week, but I am acting under the orders and directions of the Financial Authorities.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, N.E.) : Would it not be possible, consistently with the requirements of the case, for the Government to give a day after Easter in order to discuss the important questions which will undoubtedly be raised by the Report not yet laid on the Table ?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I certainly am most anxious there should be an opportunity for discussion after the Report is published. I shall be glad to arrange with the right hon. Gentleman some convenient day.

SILVER COMMISSION IN GERMANY.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is now in a position to give the House any information as to the appointment of a Commission by the German Government for the purpose of raising and re-establishing the value of silver ; and whether the reasons for the appointment of that Commission were explained by the Minister of Agriculture on behalf of the Government in a speech delivered on the 18th of January last ?

SIR E. GREY : The reasons for the appointment of the Commission were given in a speech made by the Minister of Agriculture on the 18th of January last, and by the President of the Commission at its first meeting, an account of which is given in *The North German Gazette* of the 23rd of February. I can give the House no further information than has already been made public by those speeches.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he now prepared to announce the names of gentle-

men who will form the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland, the terms of the Reference, and the date of the issue of the Commission ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I may be able before Easter to announce the names of the gentlemen who will form the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland, the terms of the Reference, and the date of the issue of the Commission.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : In view of the appeal by the Leader of the House yesterday—an appeal made on grounds which we fully appreciate—to bring the Debate on the Address to a conclusion to-night, it will be convenient if the right hon. Gentleman will tell the House that the Government do not propose to take any Business before Easter except the financial business, on behalf of which Members are asked to sacrifice their rights.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I understand the right hon. Gentleman refers to whether the Government propose to forward any of their own Bills. No ; we do not. Of course other Business might arise not connected with these Bills.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Ordered—

That the proceedings on the Address in answer to Her Majesty's Speech, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ADJOURNED DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS).

Ordered—

That the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Speech have precedence this day of the Notices of Motions.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (INTRODUCTION OF BILLS).

SIR W. HARCOURT : I promised last night to make a statement to the House with reference to the difficulty which arose on the Motion for the adjournment of the House. It will be in the memory of hon. Members that

on the last day of last Session, just before the Prorogation, there was a conversation as to shortening the proceedings in this House by taking the Ballot for Private Bills in one of the Committee Rooms so as to save the waste of two hours. It certainly was the understanding, I think, of everybody that the Rules applying to the proposed Ballot for the introduction of Bills in a Committee Room would be the same as those which apply to the Ballot taken in the House. It was not contemplated that there was to be any change except that of locality. Mr. Speaker was accordingly asked to draw up Regulations. The difficulty, as I understand, has arisen from the fact that the Ballot under these circumstances is to be taken on the second day instead of the first. Mr. Speaker was good enough to suggest to the House on March 1 certain Regulations, and the hon. Member for North Kerry thereupon pointed out an objection to the form of these Regulations which he thought might deprive private Members of some rights. The late Prime Minister, on the last day of the Session, urged that the matter should not then be further discussed, but that communications should be opened between all Parties in the House as to what should be the form of the Regulations. I need not say that a good deal has happened since March 1; the House has not been sitting, and there has been no opportunity, therefore, for such communications. But it certainly would not be the desire of the House, and I am sure that in the lamented absence of Mr. Speaker I may take upon myself to say it was not Mr. Speaker's desire, that the position of any Member should be prejudicially affected by anything that took place upon that occasion. Therefore, the only question the House has to consider is what is to be done under the present circumstances. It is desirable we should have a clear idea of what is the Rule of the House in these matters. A practice has grown up of combinations, or, to use the more sinister word, "syndicates," of members, co-operating for the purpose of promoting Bills in which they take a special interest. That is not a new practice; on the contrary, it is an old practice. Now, we must take care to do nothing inconsistent with the Rules of the House. The law on this matter

is an old one. Notice was taken of it as long ago as 1876, when the practice I have referred to was found to be in full operation, and then Mr. Speaker Brand laid it down that such a proceeding "was highly inconvenient, if not irregular." He also said that a Member could only give notice of one Motion with a view to obtaining priority under the Ballot for such Motion, and could not put his name down for several chances, and that if several Members combined to enter their names on the Notice Paper to give notice of one and the same Motion the Rule was practically evaded. I ask the House to note the word "evaded." It is not suggested that the practice is a violation of the law. Evasion is a different thing from violation. How did Mr. Speaker Brand suggest that that evasion should be dealt with? He said that if such a proceeding were

"Persisted in the House might feel it necessary to check such a proceeding by requiring each Member, when entering his name on the Notice Paper, to enter also the subject-matter of the Motion."

The view of Mr. Speaker Brand, therefore, was that if the House desired to check the practice in question, there must be a new Rule. If it is desired to prevent the practice, it must be done by Resolution of the House. No one can alter, and certainly Mr. Speaker never thought of altering, the Rule of the House without a Resolution of the House. That is a plain statement of the law. The question is—what are we to do now? Under all the circumstances, having had the advantage of the advice and assistance of the authorities of the House, what I think is the best course to take is that the well-meant attempt on the part of everybody to deliver the House from the incubus of these notices not having been entirely successful, we should regard the proceedings thereon, as the French say, as *n'en est venu*. I will venture to suggest that we should take our stand upon the existing law, that we should recur to the old Rule, or rather to the existing Rule, and that the Member who goes to the Ballot need not give his Motion or the name of his Bill beforehand; but I hope the House will still adhere to the alteration of the locality for the Ballot, and will carry it on in the Committee Room under the Rule of the House. If that is satisfactory to

the House I will move this Resolution, which will help the authorities of the House—

“That all Members who desire to ballot for Bills, other than Government Bills, do hand in their names to the Clerk before the conclusion of Wednesday Sitting, and that a copy of the title of the Bill be handed in at the latest during the Sitting of the House on Thursday, and that the Ballot may be taken at noon on Thursday in Committee Room E.”

If that is a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, the names of the Motions put down will appear in the Votes, and business will proceed according to the established practice of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That all Members who desire to ballot for Bills, other than Government Bills, do hand in their names to the Clerk before the conclusion of Wednesday Sitting, and that a copy of the title of the Bill be handed in at the latest during the Sitting of the House on Thursday; that the Ballot be taken at noon on Thursday, in Committee Room E.”—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*.)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has gone beyond the actual necessities of the moment, and has given his views as to the general policy which ought to animate the House in drawing up Rules to regulate the introduction of Bills. I do not propose to follow the right hon. Gentleman in that matter now, nor is it necessary to do so. The right hon. Gentleman has reminded the House that successive Speakers have laid down most distinctly that the practice of combination or forming syndicates breaks the spirit of the Rule if it does not violate the letter, and that any change which should make it impossible to bring in Bills by combination would be an arrangement which would carry out the ancient practice and traditions of the House. But on the general question I think this is not a proper time to come to a decision, if for no other reason, for the reason that the Speaker is not in the Chair, and the House cannot have the benefit of his opinion. Therefore, I will not resist the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman provided it is distinctly understood that by acceding to it we do nothing whatever to endorse the practice of bringing in Bills by combination, but are absolutely leaving it open for the further decision of the House. None of us on either side of the House are giving

our approval or adhesion to a practice which has grown up contrary to the ancient traditions of Parliament. Having made it quite clear that no general principle is involved in the course we are about to pursue, it is only necessary for me further to say that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, or something like it, may be accepted, provided it is made perfectly clear that gentlemen who have already given notices will be in no way damaged by the new departure made to-day. A certain number of Members have already given in the titles of their Bills; certain Members have since given in their names without the titles of Bills; if, therefore, gentlemen who have given in both name and title are held to what they have done they will be clearly in a much worse position than those who are going to be allowed to give in their titles afterwards. On the other hand, if the titles given in are to be erased injustice may be done to Members who have gone away not anticipating any change in the arrangements.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think the right hon. Gentleman misunderstands my point. No Member who has put his name or name and title down need be in any way prejudiced; he need not withdraw anything, nor be debarred from availing himself of the procedure now agreed to.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid that even then injustice would be done. I would suggest that the Resolution should be so altered that a Member who has already sent in his name should be considered as having sent in notice for a place, and not as having given the name of a Bill. That would clearly be fair. It will require some slight modification of the words of the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman; but, subject to such modification, the Resolution might meet with general approval.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said, they were agreed that the question of policy was not to be touched now; the material point was, that an alteration in the mode of introducing Bills could not be accomplished without the consent of the House. The scheme proposed by the Speaker would not exclude combination except to a limited extent; but the present system did rather tend to temper the blind despotism of chance by an element of rational choice.

Sir W. Harcourt

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I should like to ask whether Members will have to attend the Ballot personally?

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): It seems to me personal attendance is not any more necessary than at the Ballot for seats in the Ladies' Gallery.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The practice will be the same as when the proceedings took place in the House. It cannot be known what the Motions are to be unless Members are in attendance to give the information.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he could not understand the last difficulty raised by the Leader of the House. He could not see that it would be at all necessary for Members to attend the Ballot, as the Motions were afterwards to be handed to the Clerk at the Table. Then on Friday the list would be read over and dates put down. It would be competent for a Member who had already given the name of a Bill to withdraw it if he wished to do so, and if he did not he could allow it to remain. That would suit him extremely well. He was very glad to think that although they changed the procedure somewhat they adhered to the essential points of the existing plan. Still, he was not altogether satisfied with the proposed plan. A proposal he would mention for the purpose of obtaining for it the consideration of hon. Members was that at the commencement of the Session any Member might inscribe his name in a list with the subject attached to it, and that any other Member might underwrite the subject so stated, a Member being limited to one underwriting, and the order of precedence being determined by the number of signatures on the paper. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Members might laugh, but that would be strictly carrying out the principle of reasonable choice. If there was a considerable number of Members who wished to have a particular Bill brought in they ought to have the chance of combining to secure a good position for it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR To carry out the view which I think met with the approval of all the Members of the House I would suggest that these words be added to the Resolution—

"That with regard to the Notices already handed in the names should be published for the purpose of determining the precedence, and the title of the Bill be handed in afresh before the conclusion of the Thursday sitting."

I would again question whether gentlemen should be required to attend the Committee Room. I do not think that is at all necessary. All we want is some method which everybody will know and by which all further trouble will be saved.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,

"That with regard to Notices already handed in the names only be published for the purpose of determining the precedence, and the title of the Bill be handed in afresh before the conclusion of Thursday sitting."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

SIR W. HARCOURT: Of course, if that is what the House desires it will be well to add it to the Motion at once; but I would point out to the House that some practical inconvenience may arise from it. If an hon. Member does not attend the Ballot he will not know what goes on there, and may have 20 or 30 gentlemen putting down the same Motion as himself. It seems to me that the result would be that, instead of being a mere lottery, the Ballot will be a blind man's buff.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.) said, all difficulty would be obviated if a list of Members were placed in a book in some public place, sufficient room being left after the name of each Member for the title of the Bill he proposed to bring in. Other Members would then be able to see at once what Bills had been put down.

SIR W. HARCOURT: If, say, No. 30 comes to the Table first without knowing what the previous 29 Members have put down before him great confusion and difficulty may arise.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's remark had shown very conclusively the danger of interfering with the ancient and established procedure of the House. At the very moment when he was proposing that the Ballot should

be no longer taken in the open House he had given conclusive reasons to show why it should be so taken, and had shown that every Member would think it advisable to attend Committee Room E to learn his fate. If so, a kind of Monte Carlo would be established in Committee Room E, and the attendance would be very large.

Mr. SNAPE (Lancashire, S. E., Heywood) pointed out that the Resolution did not express whether Members were to attend personally at the Ballot or not, and he thought it essential that this should be clearly stated.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) wished to know whether hon. Members were to be present to-morrow in order to introduce their Bills personally?

*Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) suggested that after the Ballot in Committee Room E a list of names and the order in which they stood might be printed before 3 o'clock and issued on Thursday.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That all Members who desire to ballot for Bills, other than Government Bills, do hand in their names to the Clerk before the conclusion of Wednesday Sitting, and that a copy of the title of the Bill be handed in at the latest during the Sitting of the House on Thursday.

That the Ballot be taken at Noon on Thursday in Committee Room E.

That with regard to Notices already handed in the names only be published for the purpose of determining the precedence, and the title of the Bill be handed in afresh before the conclusion of Thursday Sitting.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER
MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.
MOTION FOR ADDRESS. ADJOURNED
DEBATE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question [12th March], "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as followeth:—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."—(Mr. Courtenay Warner.)

Mr. Gibson Bowles

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

*LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my intention, with the indulgence of the House, to run briefly over the heads of the Queen's Speech as far as they refer to the legislation proposed for this year. I will run rapidly over the names of the Bills in the order in which they come. The place of honour is given to the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill. Then comes the Registration Bill, then the Bill for the Abolition of Plural Voting, and then the Bills for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales and the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. The Bill for the Equalisation of Rates in London follows, and then there is the Bill giving greater powers to the County Council, as announced yesterday in the House of Lords, and the measure for the exercise of local control over the liquor traffic, which was, I think, emphasised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday. There are also to be measures—which is a noun of multitude—for the promotion of conciliation in labour disputes and also for the amendment of the Factory and Mines Act and the reform of the system of conducting inquiries into fatal accidents in Scotland. There are thus 12 first-class Bills—six of them being highly controversial—and in addition there is the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget, which will take a month to pass if one-tenth part of the rumours about it prove to be true. In addition, there is the question of the expenditure of money on the Navy, and there is also the whole of the year's Supply to be got through. Now, I put this plethora of Parliamentary Business before the House, and I ask what is likely to be the future of this Session. The House has been called together on the 12th of March, a date which I think can only be paralleled by going back to the year 1868. I must remind the House of what was the character of the Session of 1893-4. Parliament met on the 31st of January, 1893, and adjourned on the 23rd of September. It met again on the 2nd of November, and adjourned for three or four days for Christmas. It finally was prorogued on the 5th of March. It sat altogether 12 months. The real Session

of 1894 began on March 12, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested last night that it would take three years possibly to pass his programme of legislation. He said—

"If we do not finish it this year we will finish it next year, and if we do not finish it then we will finish it the year afterwards."

So that after having had a Session of 12 months we are now to have a triennial Session. With all respect to the right hon. Gentleman I consider his programme, if it is to be a Sessional programme, an insane programme; and I cannot get over the arrogance of Her Majesty's Ministers in bringing forward this unmanageable programme in the face of an Opposition which is at least 300, in imagining that the Opposition will sit for three years, and in even declaring that they shall sit for three years to pass that programme. I ask if you see anything sensible, anything Parliamentary, anything that anyone can understand in such a proposition, laid before men of ordinary common sense? I never heard of such a proposition. You have had opportunities as we have of testing the opinion of the people as to the long Sessions of Parliament and as to the want of legislation that those long Sessions invariably produce. In my opinion the attempt to pass all these Bills will end in passing hardly any of them, and you will go to the country at the end of your Session with a programme hardly touched. You do not mention Home Rule in the Speech from the Throne; but it is certain, and you must know it, that Home Rule will never pass. The House of Lords, you say, is to be abolished; but it will never be abolished. We shall none of us live to see the abolition of the House of Lords or to see an Irish Parliament established in Ireland. I must be allowed to allude to the heavy loss which the whole of the House of Commons, and particularly the majority of it, has sustained in the retirement of the First Lord of the Treasury from Office. Gladly do I offer my humble tribute, to borrow the words used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last evening, of admiration and regret that the great Leader of the House has gone from us. For 20 years I have had the advantage of being in the House of Commons with him and of hearing many of the great speeches he uttered during that period—in fact, nearly all of them—and I have been

fascinated by the style and arguments of those speeches—I have sometimes been almost carried away by them; and I venture to think that I am right in saying that the value has been almost immeasurable which any Member of the House must set upon his presence in the House of Commons; and I think that one may legitimately entertain doubts whether the high standard of the customs, manners, and traditions of the House of Commons will be maintained in the future so easily, now that we have lost the advantage of his controlling hand. But if I believe the House has sustained a great and irreparable loss—a loss which cannot well be adequately expressed in words—I still further cannot measure the loss which the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Leader of the House now, whom I am very glad to see in his new position—and his supporters have sustained. If anyone in the House could carry through an heroic policy, if anyone could ever carry through an heroic programme, it was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian; but I am afraid his retirement has left a gap which will not easily be filled. I say this the more confidently because without his great name, without his great influence among the masses of the people, without his eloquence, his gifts of oratory—which were unrivalled by any in this House—without his unequalled political experience and knowledge, I fancy not only your Party, but also your politics will suffer; and how will you get through the great tasks he has bequeathed to you I cannot altogether understand. Is there one of you who would say yourself that you could bear his shield or hurl his spear? I think not. Looking, then, to the future, and to the enormous mass of legislation which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has put before us as the programme for the next three years; and, looking at the absence of enthusiasm in the country—and as far as I can judge even in your own ranks—caused, as it must be caused in any army, political or military, by the loss of a great Leader, I am confident that the task which has been foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech is beyond powers like yours to accomplish in one year, in two years, or even in three years. Are you thoroughly united on the great policy of the establishment of an Irish

Parliament? The utterances of one very high in authority among you seem to me most ambiguous. Those utterances have varied within the space of four months and even in the space of a few hours. I must ask the House to allow me to quote a speech which was made on September 7 last year, on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill in the House of Lords, by the noble Earl who is now the head of the Government. What was his attitude towards the Bill at that time? Speaking to the Lords, he said—

“You might have allowed the Second Reading to pass *sub silentio*, or have carried it with every form of protest; but when you got into Committee you might have modelled the Bill to your liking. You might have struck out every clause you disliked—perhaps you will say that would be every clause—then it would have been open to you to substitute what clauses you preferred. You might have had an opportunity—which, of course, you are not going to take—of declaring and defining your policy with regard to this great question of Ireland. The Bill might then have gone down to the House of Commons, where it would have met, no doubt, with a stout resistance. But what would ultimately have come about, what would have happened if you and they had both insisted on the mass of your Amendments? A conference might have taken place between the two Houses which might have led to a future result; and I say that the patriotic course for your Lordships to have taken, unless you are determined never to devolve any local business to Ireland, was to give this Bill a Second Reading and take an opportunity of settling with the other House. I find that suggestion receives very little favour from noble Lords opposite.”

That was the expression of the noble Earl on September 7. But that did not give much idea that the noble Earl was animated at that time with any great affection for Home Rule or for any particular form of Home Rule. The noble Earl added one more sentence—

“I speak as a witness, but not as an enthusiastic witness, in favour of Home Rule.”

I think it right to bring these utterances to the notice of the House of Commons. The noble Earl has since become First Minister of the Crown, but I think these words about the non-enthusiastic witness expressed his feelings at that time. But the noble Earl has made a great change, which all of you have made, and which the Secretary of State for War, who is slumbering, I am sorry to see, described as “having found salvation.” The noble Earl now fills the Office of First Minister of the Crown, and this change has

stiffened him. The necessity for keeping the Gladstonian Party together led to the declaration at the Foreign Office on Home Rule to the Party which he leads, and which I declare he cannot go back from. It is different from his other speech, but I say that, if challenged, he would not go back from the plain English meaning of that speech. In his speech at the Foreign Office the noble Earl said—

“The other question that I have said requires more than a passing word is the group of questions that are known as the Irish Question. Gentlemen, to that question we are bound by every tie of honour and of policy. [*Loud and prolonged cheers.*] I know it would be affection to deny that a speech of mine in the House of Lords last year has raised some doubts as to my position on that question. I think it must be to those who have read that speech in a cursory manner that these doubts occurred. It is said that all roads lead to Rome, and there are many roads by which to arrive at a conviction on Home Rule; but I venture to say that our line is as direct as any that conducts to the goal, and that it will not be any the less steadfastly pursued.”

DR. MACGREGOR: I rise to Order. I wish to ask whether the noble Lord is in Order in discussing Home Rule, which has no part in the Queen's Speech?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The noble Lord is in Order. The question which he is discussing is the absence of Home Rule from the Queen's Speech.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Which the Government have shunted!

*LORD R. CHURCHILL: I advise the hon. Gentleman, who has passed most of his life in Scotland, but very little in the House of Commons, to be careful before he lays down a rule of Order to the Chair. The noble Earl continued in these words—

“If, gentlemen, you had any doubts in your minds as to the course that I was likely to take on this question, I think there is one pledge that this Government gives, the character of which is as significant as that of the headship which Mr. Gladstone lately imparted—I mean the presence of Mr. John Morley. [*Loud cheers.*]”

That declaration was made to his Party, and it binds the noble Earl as tightly and as permanently as any political pledge could bind an honourable statesman. Not only does he pledge himself to those who are to keep him in office by their votes, but he refers to the presence of the Chief Secretary in his Government as forcible a confirmation of his words as the Leadership of Mr. Gladstone; and as

Lord R. Churchill

proving that his mind is irrevocably fixed on the measure of Home Rule which connects with the name of Mr. Gladstone, and with the Gladstonian Party. Therefore, I lay down—and my friends on this side of the House will see what I am driving at soon—that we, the Unionists, ought to have no doubt that the noble Earl is bound to prosecute the scheme of Home Rule which was brought in last year and rejected by the Lords; that he is identified with that scheme of Home Rule which was coupled with the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian—that scheme, and no other. This is the measure which the Chancellor of the Exchequer adheres to, if no more, certainly no less; the scheme which all his colleagues also adhere to; the scheme of 1893, which we Unionists ought to draw from the noble Earl's speech at the Foreign Office as being that which he has absolutely and irrevocably and publicly pledged himself to. That is the scheme which the Unionist Party must still take as their position for resistance in Parliament and in the country, and for resistance in the constituencies whenever the Government work themselves up to a Dissolution. It was a great and remarkable admission for the noble Earl to make when he said that it was necessary for Home Rule that the English majority should be converted. But all that argument was, I believe, but quicksands and traps to beguile Unionists and to lull their fears. That admission was only made to cajole noble Lords and the Unionist Party. I think we can prove that there is not the slightest likelihood of the English majority being converted. The bye-elections were one indication of that; and the greatest proof of the fact that no conversion has taken place, and that none will take place, is to be found in the insuperable reluctance of Her Majesty's Government to dissolve. While the noble Earl showed to his colleagues and to his Radical supporters his fidelity to the whole Home Rule Bill of 1893 in terms which he can never get out of, he also has an eye to the Irish majority which is necessary to keep him in power; and I therefore reiterate that we must hold a firm grip on that utterance of the noble Earl as to his opinions on Home Rule. That is the key to the policy which the First Minister of the

Crown has embraced. It is, and it always has been, the habit of the noble Earl at the head of the Government to try to be reserved, to try to be mysterious, and to try to bewilder instead of to speak plainly and to make his policy "understood by the people." But that is the platform upon which we must fight, as we have fought before, and we must never abandon it, as it is the only platform upon which we are assured of victory. I turn to another ambiguity to which I desire to draw the attention of the Government. It is also a matter mentioned in the Queen's Speech. It was sometimes said that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian—whose loss we all regret—was a little difficult to understand; but I declare that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian was in all points as clear as the sun at noon-day compared with the utterances which the noble Earl at the head of the Government sometimes gives expression to. In the Queen's Speech the subject of Scotch Church Disestablishment is mentioned. Last Session, the House will remember, the subject was left to a private Member, the Representative of one of the Divisions of Glasgow; this Session the Government have, in the same sentence in the Speech, definitely placed two measures of Disestablishment—in Wales and in Scotland—before Parliament. Obviously, therefore, they are on the same equality in the view of the Government. But the noble Earl in his speech last night, whom I suppose to be the best-informed man on the subject in Her Majesty's Parliament, said—

"I do not place these measures on the same foundation."

He draws an elaborate distinction between the claims of Wales and those of Scotland, and confesses that he attaches importance to the Scotch Disestablishment being placed second in the sentence in the Speech. Well, the noble Earl is going to address a great meeting at Edinburgh in a few days. Do you think that the Scotch people will take an ambiguous declaration like that as to the priority of Disestablishment in Scotland and in Wales? I think the noble Earl will have to ask, "Are you in favour of Scotch Disestablishment or not?" because it is on that question that Scotch elections will mainly turn. It is im-

possible to rely upon the vague words uttered in the noble Earl's speech last night as to whether the Scotch Church is to be disestablished or not. I must now deal with what the noble Earl said at the Foreign Office about the House of Lords. He adopted a form of language which will please hon. Members opposite. He spoke very much as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer did, who said—

"It is the voice of the nation which is to decide,"

that is the regular, orthodox style. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

"whether its Representatives are or are not to be 'controlled' by the House of Lords. But what you have to do in the House of Commons is to give voice to the convictions and to the will of the people. The House of Lords may deal with these matters as it thinks fit; but when the House of Commons, by the voice of the majority of its Members, acting in no ambiguous manner and with no divided sound, sends up measures to the House of Lords, if they are to be mutilated, or if they are to be rejected, then the time will come when the opinion of the nation must be taken on that question. It is for you to prepare and ripen that opinion."

But that is what we are saying every day. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

"If I may venture to give you any counsel, it is that you shall devote yourselves to this object, and this object above all; that you shall show a united front; that the Liberal Party shall come together as one man, and that, therefore, when they speak of the majority of the House of Commons there shall be no doubt as to what that majority is and what its intention is. The intention of the majority is to execute what they think, and understand, and believe to be the mandate of the people."

That is the policy which was certainly bequeathed to the Liberal Party by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian in his last address in this House, and it is the policy that was declared by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday, and that is the policy which has been consecrated before the Party at the Foreign Office by the noble Earl. I do not complain. He has to maintain his position by votes in Parliament and by votes in the country. I merely remark upon the presence in the existing Cabinet of no less than six Peers. I also remind the House of Commons that, when the noble Earl was not in the Ministry, he was for mending the House of Lords, and he proposed a scheme for its reform;

Lord R. Churchill

but this year, when he is the First Minister of the Crown and has to keep together a majority, he is in favour of ending the House of Lords. In conclusion, I would remind the Party to which I have the honour to belong that it is clear that the Gladstonian policy of Home Rule and the scheme of Home Rule with which the late Prime Minister was connected, that the Gladstonian policy against the House of Lords, and that the Gladstonian Newcastle Programme have been publicly adopted by the new First Minister of the Crown. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Yes, that is no doubt satisfactory to you, and it is equally satisfactory to me; and I would further remind the Members of the Unionist Party that we have exactly the same Radical and revolutionary policy to oppose that we have had to oppose for the last 10 years, that the same methods of opposition which we have given to those forces must be resumed, and, in my judgment, if that is done, that opposition will be as successful in the future as it has been in the 10 years which have preceded this memorable Session.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I should be glad if the House would allow me to make one or two remarks upon the Irish policy of the Government which has been touched upon by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and has been dealt with by the noble Lord who has just sat down. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition made some remarks about Ireland with the tone of which I have no fault to find. There was, however, one passage in his speech which I have heard with regret—that was, the one in which the right hon. Gentleman declared that he was prepared to receive the proposal announced in the Speech with regard to the evicted tenants in an attitude of critical suspicion. I regret that; and I was not a little astonished at that declaration, because I do not believe that there is a single man in this House who is less capable of anything like political vindictiveness than the right hon. Gentleman. But I am bound to say that the tone of his remarks about the evicted tenants did seem to betray a temper of mind in respect to deeds or misdeeds in Ireland which, to some extent, savoured of political vindictiveness,

and that I am perfectly sure the right hon. Gentleman himself must know is fatal to anything like a settlement of the question which he equally must know is indispensable to the peace of Ireland. I will pass from the language of the right hon. Gentleman to that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. I noticed that when my right hon. Friend received a deputation on the subject he said he desired a settlement of the question if it could be obtained upon reasonable terms. The other day the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin was still more explicit, and he used language which I venture to contrast with that of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and which I sincerely hope will be the spirit which will animate the reception of the Government proposal when the time comes for making it known. My right hon. Friend said—

“They were told that in the Session about to be opened the Government would bring in an Evicted Tenants Bill. He himself should be in favour of any well-considered Bill for that purpose. It was desirable that they should be generous in their treatment of these tenants, for they went out at a time when Ireland was greatly agitated, when men lost their heads and ceased to be masters of their actions. A new arrangement was necessary, and if the Government brought in a reasonable Bill he should be willing to give it all the support he could, and he believed it would be the policy of the Unionist Party to give it an unhesitating support.”

That is the language of statesmanship, and I hope these words will have the weight they ought to have, considering the source whence they came, when the Bill is before the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition made some remarks upon what he regarded as the controversial innuendo of the expression in the Queen's Speech “the ordinary law.” The right hon. Gentleman said that after all the whole difference between what we call ordinary law and what he regards as special Criminal Law consisted in two things. First, the power to hold secret inquiry; and second, the power of change of venue. I have a pretty strong recollection of that Crimes Act, and I entirely dissent from the right hon. Gentleman's description. By far the most vital difference between the ordinary law and the special Criminal Law was, not change of venue nor secret

inquiry, but the power of the State to try cases where the most delicate points of fact and of law come in—cases of conspiracy—before the Resident Magistrates without a jury. The right hon. Gentleman cannot have forgotten that that was the real sting and fang of the Act; and his own officers must have told him that when the time came to suspend those powers, under his rule or under that of his successor, the sting of the Act was being drawn. The right hon. Gentleman says that reverting to the ordinary law is not the secret of the tranquillity which now fortunately prevails in Ireland, and he admits that I am not likely to maintain it is so. I agree with him that the factors in the social state of Ireland are far too complex for any one simple explanation of that kind. But I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that at this time last year he prophesied, and his friends round him—especially those from Ireland—prophesied, that our action in revoking proclamations which brought these powers into operation would probably lead to trouble and turmoil. The right hon. Gentleman said that I was glad enough to use the powers of secret inquiry when I could get them. He refers, no doubt, to the secret inquiries held under the Explosives Acts. Three such inquiries have been held—one of them when the Member for Leeds was Chief Secretary, and two of them since I have been Chief Secretary. Two related to explosions at Dublin Castle, and one to an explosion elsewhere. I will confess to the right hon. Gentleman, or rather I will assure him, that I did not give my sanction to the holding of those Courts of secret inquiry with any great expectation that any good would come of them. But I did the best that I could. In the last case I summoned a Magistrate to preside over it with whose powers the right hon. Gentleman is well acquainted, and I gave the powers of secret inquiry a full chance. But all through the controversy, from 1887 to the present time, I have always held the same view, that secret inquiries in Ireland—unless in very exceptional cases, such as the Phoenix Park murders—have not made persons amenable to justice, and what has happened in connection with the two secret inquiries in Ireland since I have been responsible for Irish

administration entirely bears out that opinion. The right hon. Gentleman said that the present Government have been favoured in their administration of the law in Ireland by various circumstances—by the fact that gentlemen from Ireland have done the best they could and have used all the influence which they possessed to keep the country as quiet as possible. The right hon. Gentleman did not say last night, but he has said elsewhere, that we had had the advantage of having clergymen on our side; and he enumerated among the favourable conditions the fact that we are now confronted by an Opposition which has never done anything to severely criticise the action of the present Executive or to make their work difficult. That language was used at Manchester not many weeks ago. The right hon. Gentleman forgot that in five successive weeks at the beginning of last Session five Votes of Censure were moved, wound up with a full-dress Censure Debate moved by the right hon. Gentleman himself. Therefore, I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman is entitled to take much credit to himself.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not mention that.

MR. J. MORLEY: Quite true, he did not refer to it last night, but he did in his speech at Manchester. People often use on platforms language which they are slow to repeat here. The right hon. Gentleman said that he did not dispute the allegations made in the gracious Speech as to the great quietude and tranquillity which now happily prevails in Ireland; but he took the occasion to say that he had never been a profound believer in crime statistics, and I quite understand the reason which induced such a criticism. But those statistics have been the barometer by which all Governments have tested the state of things in Ireland; and we have the right to resort to them in the present case. I may add that all the Judges' Charges—with one exception, to which I will refer later—during the Spring Assizes bear testimony to the same fact, that Ireland is in a condition of general tranquillity which has not been equalled for many years past. Of course, all parties agree in rejoicing over that state of things. The right hon. Gentleman then complained of us for

hanging up Home Rule. He remarked that the suspension of the measure for Home Rule was a great injustice to Ireland, and it was said by the Leader of the Opposition in another place last night that so long as that measure is held in suspense, so long as Ireland is left in a condition of uncertainty as to what her immediate political destiny is to be, so long there can be no security for either any land transactions or any others. The facts do not support that contention. Whatever the fortunes of Home Rule may be, it cannot be denied that the temporary suspense of the prosecution of that measure has had no such disastrous or mischievous effect upon transactions in Ireland as the right hon. Gentleman seems to apprehend. The noble Lord in another place said that the proper policy in Ireland was to push forward peasant proprietorship and such schemes as light railways. But why is peasant proprietorship not pushing itself forward? Because the Act which the right hon. Gentleman passed in 1891 is, for reasons which were pointed out to him then, not working as he hoped it would do and as I hoped it would do. When we are told that tardiness in land purchase is due to a want of sense of security, everyone must know that it is not the true explanation, nor one that the most competent experts on the Land Question—men detached from Party controversies—would countenance. I will now turn to the speech of the noble Lord who has just sat down, and my observations need be very few. As far as Home Rule is concerned, the speech of the noble Lord is one which certainly gave us no dissatisfaction on this side of the House. The noble Lord has perceived, and has stated in emphatic language, what it is that the new Prime Minister indicated in his speech, and what is the policy which the new Prime Minister intends to pursue. There can be no mistake in the mind of anyone who heard or who read the speech of the Prime Minister at the Foreign Office yesterday—there can be no possibility of mistake—as to the intention of the noble Earl to use all the power which his new position gives him to prosecute the cause of Home Rule. There is a reason for that which, after all, the Leader of the Opposition very plainly and justly stated. It would be contrary to all honour,

it would be a departure from every tradition by which public men in England for a century past have held themselves bound, if a Minister who was responsible with other Members of a Government for the production of a Home Rule scheme in 1893 were to come into power in 1894, and, without a word of retracting, to hesitate or to flinch from further prosecution of that measure. The Leader of the Opposition took that point at once, and it is an unanswerable point; and no one who knows Lord Rosebery would suspect that he is the man who is going to begin the degradation of the traditions of English statesmen and of English public life and honour. I am glad the noble Lord has stated so clearly that the Prime Minister, in terms never to be got out of, advances the policy of Home Rule. The noble Lord referred to some language used by the Prime Minister, not at the Foreign Office, but in another place. I do not wonder that all words and declarations upon this most important subject, which for so many years has aroused such passion, should be carefully scrutinised. The noble Lord referred to the declaration of the Prime Minister that before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament England will have to be convinced of its justice. Lord Rosebery was speaking in the House of Lords. He was speaking to the House of Lords in connection with the action of the House of Lords. What the action of the House of Lords in regard to the Home Rule Bill has been we here know only too well. Lord Rosebery's language meant that it was, and could be of no avail for us to submit Home Rule Bill after Home Rule Bill to the House of Lords, certain as those Bills would be, in the present temper of the House of Lords, to meet the same fate as the Bill which was sent up last year—that it could be of no avail to send such Bills up until we had made further progress in the conversion of the minds of the people. Of course, we do not entirely decline to face the facts. We know as well as you do that there is a majority in the number of votes in this House against us; but we have a right to anticipate—and Lord Rosebery expressed his own confident anticipation—that the same process of conversion which swelled our English supporters between 1887 and 1892 will

take place. Lord Rosebery may be right or he may be wrong, but that is what he told the House of Lords. Lord Rosebery said—

“If we can go on giving proofs and pledges that Ireland is entitled to be granted that boon which she has never ceased to demand since the Act of Union was passed, I believe that the conversion of England will not be of a slow or difficult character.”

We think he is right, but what he said was an anticipation of the conversion of English constituencies as distinguished from those of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland—a conversion which will not be slow nor difficult, but will be easy and rapid. I find no inconsistency whatever between a declaration of that kind and the declaration which he gave at the Foreign Office earlier in the day. It could not be, and was not, an expression of the doctrine that in dealing with future Home Rule Bills we are to regard the only question as one whether the majority was not only Imperial but was also English. That is an impossible doctrine. It is an impossible doctrine that you should require us always, and especially in connection with Home Rule, to have a second majority. I do not wonder—I frankly confess it—at the vigilance, at the suspicion, at the jealousy on the part of the Irish Members of all sections. I do not blame them. They have been made for ages, I may say, the shuttlecock for English Parties to play with, and having at last found an English Party with English Leaders who have pledged themselves to fidelity, I say that I do not wonder, with all their confidence in our good faith, that at any whisper of dissension—such idle and groundless rumours as those referred to yesterday of dissensions in the Cabinet—they are occasionally stirred by suspicion and animated by jealousy. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin said yesterday that he found some fault with us for not instantly repealing the Coercion Act. Now, I put it to my hon. and learned Friend, and to the hon. Gentlemen who sit around him, whether there could be conceived a more absolute waste of time than for us to have brought in a Bill for the repeal of the Crimes Act last year, or to have made a promise to bring it in this year. We know perfectly well that the same

tenacity we exhibited in resisting the imposition of that Act would have been shown by hon. Members opposite in resisting its abrogation.

MR. HARRINGTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to say that I founded my observation on the speech of the right hon. Gentleman himself, who, a few days after the Motion which he himself moved against the introduction of that Bill, said in the country that the Liberal Party would not be always in a minority, and, unless he mistook its spirit, the first duty to which it would turn when it came into power would be the repeal of that measure.

MR. J. MORLEY: Does the hon. Gentleman really mean that he would rather that we had brought in last year a Bill for the repeal of the Coercion Act than a Bill to grant Home Rule?

MR. HARRINGTON: My observation applied to this year, not to last year.

MR. J. MORLEY: Would my hon. Friend rather have a Bill for the repeal of the Coercion Act or a Bill for the evicted tenants? I do not believe, whatever he may say—sincerely, no doubt, for the purposes of debate at the moment—that this is a serious accusation against us. Then my hon. Friend asked, “When is the Home Rule Bill to be brought in?” I was glad to hear him say, speaking for the group of which he is one, that the Irish Members did not wish to force the hands of the Government unduly; they had made no demand that Home Rule should be included in the programme of the Session. That is language of moderation, of good sense, and of policy. In answer to his question, which is not an unfair one, I have to say that it is impossible—and the House knows it—to chalk out and draw a hard-and-fast line of dates, hours, all definitely fixed. We frankly admit that, having brought forward proposals of such Constitutional magnitude and of such importance as the Home Rule Bill of last year, we are bound to prosecute them with all the despatch that circumstances will allow, and that we are bound also to prosecute them in the manner and with such regard to time and season as in our judgment is most likely to commend those proposals to the favourable consideration of the country. I do not consider that a very Machiavelian position. It seems to me to be a position of

common sense, and one which Ministers and Governments have taken up before now with respect to measures. Whether the Government will in 1895 bring in the Bill, of 1893, amended or unamended, whether they will advise a Dissolution without passing a Home Rule Bill through this House, by what distribution of business we can best devote the time of Parliament, having regard to the purposes to which this Parliament was elected—these are questions which no right hon. Gentleman on the opposite Bench will deny at this stage it is wholly premature to discuss; and it is not reasonable nor in conformity with Parliamentary practice to expect the Government to be prepared with a cut-and-dried programme. If anyone believes that there is any flinching on the part of the Government as to the policy on Home Rule, they do us a great injustice. They must know in their minds that we are as men of honour bound to that policy. Whatever our fortunes may be, whatever may happen at elections, there are those among us who will never cease to adhere to that policy. We should be the most dishonoured of political Parties if there was any inclination in the mind of one of us to flinch or recede from the policy which Mr. Gladstone first pressed upon us. I can only say for my own part, as the noble Lord has mentioned my name, that, so far as I am concerned, every day of my experience of Ireland and of Irish government strengthens and deepens my conviction that all we find most troublesome in the facts, or in the defects, if you like, of the Irish character, in the working of some Irish institutions, can only be removed, can only be mitigated and modified, by giving Ireland those habits of responsibility which self-government alone can give, and which self-government has given to the people of this Island.

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have often had occasion to feel for the difficulties of the position occupied by the right hon. Gentleman as Irish Secretary in this Government. Those difficulties have been enormous, but I confess that I do not think that during his experience a more difficult or—if I might be permitted to say so without offence—a more humiliating task ever fell to him than when he found himself put up on this occasion to try

and remove by the strength of his own character for friendliness to Ireland the bad impression which had been created by the ambiguous and halting phrases on this Irish Question used by his own new Chief yesterday in another place. I had hoped I would not have found it necessary to take part at all in the general discussion on the Address from the Throne, and I had intended to have waited for a later stage to move the Amendment of which I had given notice; but events have taken such a turn that I feel bound to let that Amendment be moved by some other Member and to intervene at once in the discussion in order to give expression to the dissatisfaction, the distrust, and the alarm which have been inspired in my mind, at any rate, by the declarations that have been made recently by Ministers, and as much by what they have not said as by what they have. We recognise, of course, the fact that as the Home Rule Question stands at this moment we cannot, in Ireland, hope to have it carried into law without another General Election, and without a verdict being given in its favour by the people of these Kingdoms. But the one thing we were afraid of was that that appeal to the constituencies would be indefinitely postponed, and while indefinitely postponed the Home Rule Question would be put on the shelf and shifted back from the position of urgency to which it had been raised by the labours and sacrifices of the late Mr. Parnell, and that Ireland would find, as the necessity in the minds of Englishmen for considering this question disappeared, that the chances of obtaining a settlement of it would recede altogether from their views. Some of the dangers which we foresaw from such a change of policy have already arisen. The Leadership of the English Home Rule Party has passed from the right hon. Member for Midlothian, whose pledges have been explicit and clear, into the hands of men of whom I must say that we have no strong faith in their devotion to the cause of Home Rule, and whose declarations upon the subject have been halting and ambiguous. I do not refer to the Chief Secretary in these observations. He will not, perhaps, take it as a compliment for me to single him out. But I have never thought that he entertained anything else than an honest desire to prosecute this cause, and

I am convinced that he would not lend himself permanently to any plan for defeating the hopes of Ireland. But it is perfectly clear, from the speeches of the new Prime Minister and the Leader of the House of Commons last night, that the Home Rule Bill will not be introduced again into either House of Parliament during the existence of this Parliament. If I am wrong in this the right hon. Gentleman can easily contradict me, and say that if the Government in their wisdom decide to postpone the appeal to the constituencies they will re-introduce the Bill, and thus keep it as an urgent subject before the public mind. But they have made no such declaration, and it is clear that the intention of re-introducing the Bill in this Parliament has been abandoned. It is also perfectly clear that the life of this Parliament is to be prolonged indefinitely. The Leader of the House said last night that the Dissolution would take place when the time is ripe, and the time apparently will be ripe when the whole of the Newcastle Programme shall have been sent up to the House of Lords. The official organ of the Liberal Party, *The Daily News*, says to-day that the phrase as to the Dissolution taking place when the time is ripe means that a Dissolution is only to take place when every item of the Newcastle Programme has been passed by a majority in this House, and submitted to the House of Lords. This Parliament is to last until this House has passed Welsh and Scotch Disestablishment, and, I suppose, the Local Veto Bill. In face of all that, how anyone can pretend that the life of this Parliament, according to the present intentions of the Government, is not to be indefinitely prolonged, and Home Rule during that time put upon the shelf, passes my comprehension. If matters stood there the situation would be serious enough from the Irish point of view, and in my opinion it would be intolerable. This Home Rule Question is urgent; you have said on hundreds of platforms in England that it is urgent, and will not brook delay. You have even said that it was so urgent that no reform for the Liberal Party or English people could be carried until the Irish Question was first settled. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary complimented my hon. Friend the Member for the

Harbour Division of Dublin on the moderate and reasonable character of his statements with reference to this Session. I submit that we have never taken up an unreasonable attitude in this matter. If the Government believe that they will have a better chance of carrying the General Election if they pass certain English Bills, or if these Bills are rejected by the House of Lords, well and good. They have already passed one of those Bills, and another of them has been rejected by the House of Lords. The Government have now this Session before them. I presume that the Evicted Tenants Bill will be the first measure dealt with this Session, although that is not yet certain, because *The Daily News*—in the silence of the Ministers upon the point I must quote their organ—said the other day that the fact that the Evicted Tenants Bill was the first mentioned in the Queen's Speech did not mean that it would be first dealt with. But that Bill will not occupy a long time, and you will have the remainder of the Session in which to pass a Registration Bill. At the end of that time, if you are not prepared to keep the Home Rule Question alive by bringing it into the House of Commons again, you can then dissolve Parliament, having passed your pressing English Bills, or having got, in consequence of their rejection elsewhere, your grievance against the House of Lords. What we ask for is a declaration of intention upon these points. At present we only know two things: The first is that Parliament will not be dissolved, and the second that the Home Rule Bill will not be heard of again in this Parliament. That position is an absolutely intolerable one from the Irish point of view, and it is impossible to avoid the reflection that an extraordinary change has come over the fortunes of the Home Rule cause since the days when the cry "Ireland blocks the way" was heard on Liberal platforms. The Leader of the House of Commons said last night that Home Rule hung up was at any rate better than coercion in operation. The right hon. Gentleman sketched out a comfortable little programme for his Party in Ireland for the next few years, its items being Home Rule hung up, Ireland absolutely peaceful and contented, the Irish Members trustful and faithful, and

British Liberal measures quietly passed into law with the aid of those Irish Members. What occurs to me is that that is an exceedingly pleasant and profitable programme for the Liberal Party, and if it came into operation the temptation would be irresistible not to disturb that programme by taking down Home Rule from the shelf on which it had been placed. But the situation is really far worse than this, because it appears from the declaration of the Prime Minister last night not merely that Home Rule is to be shelved and a Dissolution indefinitely postponed, but that after the next General Election, even if the Liberal Party should obtain a majority in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and in Great Britain, we are not to get Home Rule unless, forsooth, there should be a majority of English Members in its favour. I listened most attentively to the Chief Secretary's defence of his Chief in the other House. The right hon. Gentleman does not like the expression "hanging up of Home Rule," and his phrase is "the temporary suspension of the prosecution of Home Rule." He congratulates himself on the fact that this "temporary suspension of the prosecution of Home Rule" has not had a bad effect in Ireland. Ireland, he says, is still peaceful and trustful; Ireland is still crimeless. What is the almost necessary inference to be drawn? That if Ireland was not peaceful, trustful, and crimeless it would be more difficult for you to persist in your "temporary suspension of the prosecution of Home Rule." The right hon. Gentleman says that the Prime Minister, after all, ought not to be taken too seriously. ["No, no!"] Yes, these were his words; and he says it ought to be borne in mind that the Prime Minister spoke in the House of Lords. He also says that he does not complain that the Irish Members should be suspicious even of a whisper. A whisper is his convenient description of the first official speech of a new Prime Minister. But what is the right hon. Gentleman's explanation of Lord Rosebery's extraordinary statement? He says that Lord Rosebery did not mean what the words he used ordinarily mean—that he did not mean that a majority in England for Home Rule would be necessary, and adds that, after all, it can be of no avail to submit Home Rule

Bills to the Lords until some further progress shall have been made with the conversion of England. In view of this explanation I will ask leave to read the words that were used by Lord Rosebery.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I rise to Order. I wish to know whether it is in Order to quote in this House the words of an English Minister spoken during this Session in the House of Lords?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot say that the hon. and learned Member is out of Order.

MR. J. REDMOND: It would be unfair to prevent me from reading the whole passage, considering that the Chief Secretary was allowed to read half of it. This is what the Prime Minister said—

"The noble Marquess made one remark upon the subject of Irish Home Rule with which I must confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament England, as the predominant member of the partnership between the Three Kingdoms, will have to be convinced of its justice."

I repudiate this idea of predominant partnership. If Ireland is to be a portion of the United Kingdom she must be so on an equal footing with England, and it is a preposterous and insulting doctrine to say that the votes of Irishmen as partners in the Empire are not of the same value as the votes of Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Welshmen. Lord Rosebery goes on—

"That may seem to be a considerable admission to make"

—for apparently the Prime Minister was aware that he was making an important political pronouncement—

"because your Lordships will know that the majority of English Members of Parliament, elected from England proper, are hostile to Home Rule."

Then comes the ground and the hope on which Ireland is to remain quiet and satisfied during the remainder of the years of this Parliament, for Lord Rosebery continues—

"I believe that the conversion of England in regard to Home Rule depends on one point, and one point alone, and that is the conduct of Ireland herself. I believe that if we can go on showing this comparative absence of agrarian crime; if we can point to the continued harmony of Ireland with the great Liberal Party; if we can go on giving proofs and pledges that Ireland is entitled to be granted that boon which she has never ceased to

demand since the Act of Union was passed, I believe that the conversion of England will not be of a slow or difficult character."

In the face of the only hope for Ireland being that she is to go on indefinitely on good behaviour, and in trust and loyalty to the great Liberal Party, can anyone truthfully say that the position of the Home Rule cause has not altered enormously since the time when the aged Leader of the Liberal Party declared throughout Great Britain that the question of Home Rule must be settled because it blocked the way, and because the Liberal Party would not be able to achieve any reforms until Ireland had been satisfied? It would be idle to pretend that the effect of the statement of Lord Rosebery has been modified or removed by the chivalrous speech of the Chief Secretary. The speech of the Prime Minister, in my opinion, entirely changes the whole aspect of the Home Rule Question. If Lord Rosebery is right in his view about the English majority, then the House of Lords were right in rejecting the Home Rule Bill. We were promised that, if the Lords dared to reject the Bill, all Great Britain would be made to ring with a cry for the abolition of the House of Lords. We were promised that, under such circumstances, the Government would at once pass the Bill again in an Autumn Session and send it again to the Lords, and that, if the Lords dared again to reject it, all England should be made to ring with their misconduct. Was all that talk mere moonshine? We know that the promised agitation did not come off—that not even a Parish Vestry passed a resolution denouncing the House of Lords for rejecting the Bill. We know, too, that if Lord Rosebery is right about this English majority, then all this talk about the House of Lords and about the agitation against it must have been mere hollowness and insincerity, then not only is Home Rule hung up in this Parliament, but no Government can ever seriously introduce another Home Rule Bill until an English majority in its favour has been first obtained. Ireland, North and South, may be united as one man in favour of Home Rule, and Scotland and Wales may be united in favour of it, and it may be a just thing to grant; yet, according to the doctrine of Lord Rosebery, Ireland is not to have it if

there is only a majority of one among the Representatives of England opposed to it. [*Ministerial cries of "No!"*] I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite do not like to believe that that is Lord Rosebery's view. I do not like to believe it; but I have read his words, and those words are plain and distinct. I denounce this change of attitude as a backing out on the part of Lord Rosebery on this Irish Question—as a giving away of the whole position upon which the Home Rule cause was founded by the right hon. Member for Midlothian, and I say that the declaration about England being the predominant member of the partnership is humiliating and insulting to Ireland. I know that the views of Lord Rosebery on this matter do not coincide with the declaration made by his colleagues at other times. In reading to-day one of those incisive and vigorous speeches which the Home Secretary is in the habit of making, I find that the right hon. Gentleman in August, 1892, denounced in this House the present Leader of the Opposition because he had ventured to say some time ago what Lord Rosebery has now said in the House of Lords. The Home Secretary said—

"What does the right hon. Gentleman mean? It is not disputed, as I have said, that we have a majority of the whole of the electors of the United Kingdom. It is not disputed that in three of the four component parts of the United Kingdom—namely, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales—we have a majority also. 'But,' says the right hon. Gentleman in effect, 'notwithstanding that majority of yours, I am entitled, speaking in the name of the people of England who have cast their votes the other way, to claim to ignore and override the opinion of the mass of the people of the United Kingdom, or even, if need be, to summon to my aid that pliable instrument which the Constitution has placed at my disposal for the purpose of making the will of the English minority prevail.' I protest in the name of sound Constitutional principle against this disintegrating and anarchical doctrine. I protest, in the name of the unity of this still United Kingdom, against this fantastic development of an abstract Separatist logic. So long as we have an Imperial Parliament, and so long as in that Imperial Parliament, as I trust and believe will always be the case, every part of the United Kingdom is represented, so long the Government and the policy of the Government must be determined by the vote of the majority. Yes, by the vote of the majority; and by the vote of the majority I mean a majority of the whole. Under the right hon. Gentleman's theory England is to have all the advantages of the most extreme form of Home Rule without any of the counterbalancing checks and safeguards of Imperial control."

Mr. J. Redmond

It is an interesting question for us to determine whether the Home Secretary is still of that opinion, and whether in expressing that opinion he expresses the opinion of the Government, or whether the opinion of the Government is now represented by its titular head, the Prime Minister? So far as we are concerned, it is utterly impossible for us to overlook this extraordinary and deliberate statement made in the House of Lords yesterday. One word more and I will have finished. There is another matter about which we have heard absolutely nothing in any of the Ministerial statements, and that is whether Lord Rosebery, in speaking of Home Rule, means the same thing as the Chief Secretary, and the same thing as we mean. Does he mean the Home Rule Bill which was passed through this House last year? I notice that neither he nor the present Leader of the House has said one single word about standing firmly by that Bill. On the contrary, we have had many disquieting circumstances on the matter. We know the views of the Leader of the House—at least, we know them from time to time. We know that he was a thorough-going Home Ruler in 1886, but after the Parliamentary crisis he made a speech in which he denounced Mr. Parnell's ideas of Home Rule as Fenian Home Rule. Yet last year he supported a Bill which contained almost all the prominent demands Mr. Parnell put forward. Has the right hon. Gentleman gone back to his ideas of Fenian Home Rule or not? He has said nothing to us as to what kind of Home Rule he is now going to stand by. And what Lord Rosebery has said is worse than silence on the question, because he sounded the note of compromise so far back as the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill last year. He clearly showed that his view of the settlement of the question was a compromise on that Bill. The Irish Members accepted the Bill, but avowedly and openly, as a compromise upon what they considered they were entitled to. It therefore comes to this—that Lord Rosebery's ideas of a settlement of Home Rule is a compromise on that compromise. If that be so, then I say that the situation of the question is a lamentable one from an Irish point of view. What was the phrase used by Lord Rosebery last night? It was "local

self-government for purely local affairs." He would not trust himself apparently to use even the words "national self-government," or "Home Rule," or "autonomy." By "Home Rule" we Irishmen mean something more than a purely local self-government for purely local affairs. We mean by "Home Rule" a Government which would be consistent with the supremacy of this Parliament and with our position in the Empire, a national Government with something of the pride and the honour attaching to a national Government and a national Parliament; and therefore I say that the silence of the Leader of the House as to what he now means by Home Rule, and the words used by Lord Rosebery last night, are calculated to inspire us with suspicion and with doubt. All I have to say in conclusion is this: If it be the plan of the Government to put this question conveniently on the shelf for the next three or four years, and to go on quietly and smoothly here with English Bills, just as if no Irish Question were clamouring for settlement at your doors, just as if Ireland were prosperous, contented, and happy, and if it be their belief that Ireland will acquiesce in that view and maintain this peace and order and tranquillity which they desire, I think they will find they are living in a fool's paradise. For my part, I have no doubt whatever in my mind that as soon as the Irish people realise that this is the programme of the Liberal Party a spirit will arise in Ireland which will make the government of Ireland by England at all, on the predominant partner theory at any rate, an absolute impossibility; and, for my part, if this is the Programme of the Liberal Party, the sooner that day comes, in my opinion, the better.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I venture to ask the attention of the House to a few words at this period of the Debate, because it is to the general Debate that I wish to address myself. At the outset let me say that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary referred to certain language he said I had used with respect to the Evicted Tenants Bill in answer to a deputation, in which I said I should gladly see any reasonable settlement. The words themselves are so slightly compromising that it is hardly worth while to correct them, but so far as I can recollect I have never

received any such deputation or uttered any language at all upon the subject.

MR. J. MORLEY was understood to say that the right hon. Gentleman had not accurately gathered what he had said.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Possibly the right hon. Gentleman is right. I hope I may, in the first instance, be allowed, on behalf of my friends as well as myself, to associate ourselves with all that has been said as to the great loss that the House of Commons has sustained by the withdrawal of its most illustrious Leader. We are quite as conscious as any can be that our Debates will lose very greatly in colour and force and dignity owing to his absence. It would ill become me—it would be a presumption which I certainly will not venture on—if I were to attempt to add anything in praise of his character and abilities. All I would wish to say is that at a time when, unfortunately, voices are sometimes raised in order to envenom political differences and to transform them into personal animosities, that we who were his loyal followers, but who for some seven years have found ourselves, much to our own regret, compelled to come into sharp conflict with him, would now desire to forget the incidents of that contest, and only remember the great services he has rendered to this House and the country. It is natural, I think, that more than usual interest should be taken in the Speech from the Throne and in the commentaries on that Speech, which have been made in another place and at the meeting at the Foreign Office. We have a change of Government—a new Prime Minister. It can well be imagined that there are, or there have been, some people who have thought that with a change of Minister there would also come a change of policy; and I do not think I shall be accused of being hypercritical when I say that the speech which Lord Rosebery made on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill did lend itself to an impression, which I believe was widespread at the time, and the possibility of which he himself has recently admitted, that he was a Laodicean in regard to Home Rule, and that he was lukewarm in respect to what has been the leading item in the Programme of his Party. But, Sir, we have been now assured that that speech was en-

tirely misconstrued. It appears that to the careless eye and the careless observer it was so studded with jokes that such a comparison might be distracted by the laughter which these jokes produced, and the true inwardness and meaning of the speech might thereby be missed. That is a warning to all of us not to be too funny. But I confess that I have never been under any illusion and have never supposed that the change which we have witnessed would or could involve a change of policy. Whatever Lord Rosebery's private opinions may be, circumstances are too strong for him, and prescribe absolutely the course which he must take; and I quite understand the argument which has been used with so much effect to-day by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, an argument which he used with so much vehemence and emphasis that I almost thought he addressed it not merely to the House of Commons, but also to the House of Lords. I quite understand that argument—that it is quite impossible that Lord Rosebery can have accepted the Leadership of his Party in order to betray it. I quite understand that it would be an insult to him to assume that by any possibility he could have varied in the slightest from the proclamation of policy which was made by his predecessor. If there are any doubts upon the subject they would, of course, have been dispelled by the speech made at the meeting at the Foreign Office. The world was told then that the Government stood where they did—that there is no change in the measures of the Government—and that, I venture to say, is the answer to the hon. Member who preceded me. Of course the measures are the measures of the late Government, and it is to them, and to every important principle in them, to these actual measures, that the Government is strongly committed. Lord Rosebery went on to say that the measures of 1893—and they, of course, include the Home Rule Bill of 1893—

“remain the exposition of the policy of the Liberal Party, and we have no intention of receding from any one of them.”

Those words, I think, are sufficiently clear and precise, and accordingly I feel that we are face to face with the old policy. What that policy is is not so clear. We know it is the old policy, but we did not know, even when we had the

old Leader, exactly what that policy was. Hon. Members who have been to Egypt will recollect that it is very common there for experts to take impressions of the hieroglyphics in the temples and ancient monuments of Egypt, and these impressions are technically called “squeezes.” These “squeezes” represent all the mystery and all the imperfection of the inscriptions they endeavour to copy. Now we know the policy of Lord Rosebery is a “squeeze” the policy of Mr. Gladstone. We are face to face, then, with the old Gladstonian Party, although the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian is no longer there. The play is the same, but the part of Hamlet has been cut out. The Party who are chiefly concerned appear to be perfectly satisfied with this result. They congratulate themselves as though they had improved their position. If they are satisfied, so are we. We are glad that we have a distinct issue upon which once more we can meet them, and I cannot help saying that, while we regret his absence from this House, we are very glad that we have lost our most redoubtable opponent. Everybody, then, for once in a way, is satisfied, except the hon. Member for Northampton, who must be, I am sure, at this time an object of universal sympathy. The hon. Member for Northampton has been going about with his lantern looking for an honest Radical. He has been preaching in the wilderness, and not even the Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) would come to listen to him. He stands alone, a solitary monument of what has been, and all I can say to comfort him is that he must recollect that it is not the first time that “Truth” has been left at the bottom of a well. But although I think it clearly established that the measures of the Government and the policy of the Government is not changed, there is something to be said as to the time at which the most important part of that policy is to be brought forward. Has not that been a little postponed, if not by the speech at the Foreign Office, at all events by the speech in another place? My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary devoted himself to expounding the speeches of his Leader. It appears that the value of Lord Rosebery's speeches lies in the application of them; and I must say that the explanation of the

speech in the House of Lords was an explanation that explained nothing. For "what is it that Lord Rosebery has said? He has practically postponed the reconsideration of the Home Rule Question, while of course he is still a devoted follower of the policy. He has postponed its application until England, the predominant partner, has been convinced. "Oh!" says my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, "but that will be a very rapid performance." What do you mean by a rapid performance? Do you think that that will take place, and, if it does take place, how will you know that it has taken place before a Dissolution? It is perfectly certain, therefore, that, even according to the gloss that has been put upon Lord Rosebery's language by the Chief Secretary, Home Rule is absolutely placed upon the shelf during the continuance of the present Parliament. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes, but then we are told that Home Rule will come forward again when circumstances will allow, when it is thought the time is favourable for its further prosecution. Home Rule is jam yesterday and jam to-morrow, but it is never jam today. The Government are committed by the noble Lord at the head of the Government to postpone absolutely all further consideration of what has been the prime object of their policy, of what is the cardinal issue, the great dividing line between Parties, while, forsooth, we are to be invited for Party purposes to consider the long list of measures in the Newcastle Programme. We are to spend this year, next year, and the year after next in this work in spite of the fact that one of the cardinal doctrines of the Newcastle Programme is triennial Parliaments. We are to spend three years more of the time of Parliament in proceeding with the measures which are repeated year after year in the Queen's Speech. We know what that means. This is part of the process of converting a majority of the British people. The predominant partner is to be drugged with the Newcastle Programme in order that afterwards he may be able to swallow Home Rule. All these measures are baits for the British electorate. They are allurements by means of which the British elector may be induced to adopt what otherwise it is perfectly certain he would scornfully re-

ject, and therefore we have in this policy of the Government—in these tactics which I do not think are straightforward tactics—a particular comment on another statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary when he told us at Newcastle that every single vote given for British legislation was two votes given for Home Rule.

An hon. MEMBER: It was at Manchester.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, at Manchester. Then that is the light in which we must consider the policy to which the Government invites our attention. Our course, at all events, as Liberal Unionists is made absolutely clear. We separated from the Liberal Party because we would not consent to the establishment of such a Parliament in Dublin as that which has just been indicated by the hon. and learned Member opposite (Mr. J. Redmond). We have not changed our view upon that subject, and our duty will now be to prevent this great issue from being obscured and to secure as quickly as we possibly can that appeal to the people to whose decision Lord Rosebery himself has referred us.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, he thought he was one of those who, as the right hon. Gentleman had hinted, was not particularly satisfied with the present arrangement. He had thought that as a question alike of principle and of expediency the Prime Minister should be in the House of Commons, and he took it that what had happened that night clearly proved that he was right. For what had they been doing that evening? They had during the past two hours been discussing what was the meaning of certain words used by the Prime Minister in the House of Lords. For his own part, he was an exceedingly simple person. He generally attached to words used the plainest meaning. He confessed that he entirely agreed with his hon. Friend opposite when he said that the position—the Parliamentary position—of Home Rule was entirely changed by the words used by the Prime Minister yesterday. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members cried "Oh!" but what were the facts? Did they understand for a moment before they were told so yesterday that Home Rule was to be dependent upon an English majority being in favour of it?

If so, why did they waste their time over a Home Rule Bill last Session? If so, why had he and many others been round the country denouncing the House of Lords? He had heard many Conservatives justify the House of Lords, but he never heard such a complete justification of that House as that which was made by the Earl of Rosebery yesterday. For his part, he did not understand all this discussion about words. He did not trouble himself about what Lord Rosebery, or Lord Salisbury, or any other Peer thought or said about the subject. He (Mr. Labouchere) stood where the Member for Midlothian stood when he left that Treasury Bench? What was their position then? They asserted that Home Rule was the absolute right of Ireland; they asserted that when there was a majority from the United Kingdom in favour of Home Rule, it was the duty of that majority to give to Ireland what was its absolute right, and now it was absurd to tell him that there was not a difference if they were told that whether there was a majority of the United Kingdom in favour of Home Rule or not that which Lord Rosebery called "a scheme of local self-government"—this whittled-down Home Rule—should not ever pass till there was a majority of Englishmen in its favour. He should like to have that majority, of course; but he considered it the duty of the Party of which he was a Member to bring in a Home Rule Bill whatever might be the view of the majority of the English people or of the gentlemen who sat on the other side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had told him that he (Mr. Labouchere) had his sympathy. He was always delighted to have any gentleman's sympathy. In this particular case he could assure the right hon. Gentleman he did not need it. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman why. Where did he (Mr. Labouchere) go for sympathy? Well, where did the right hon. Gentleman go? He went to Birmingham. He (Mr. Labouchere) went to his constituents at Northampton. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman that public opinion was as sound in Northampton as it was unsound in Birmingham. He (Mr. Labouchere) had been to the only masters that he recognised—his constituents. And he had come back not

only with a full assurance that his constituents agreed absolutely with him in his protest as a Radical against their having put over them a Premier who was in the House of Lords, but they had given him a mandate, and that mandate he was going to fulfil. They expected in the Address something about the House of Lords. They were very much disappointed, and he suspected that a great many other people were disappointed also. They felt that it was his duty—a duty which he most willingly accepted—if there was no sound declaration in the Address against the House of Lords to move an Amendment to the Address, and that Amendment he was going to move. Now, they had had a good many utterances from responsible gentlemen in the Ministry in regard to the House of Lords, but what did these utterances amount to? They amounted to this—that something ought to be done at some time. What that something was that ought to be done or when it was to be done they did not know. Very possibly, after this assurance in regard to Home Rule in Ireland, these declarations would be supplemented by a statement that they were only to deal with the matter of the House of Lords as soon as the House of Lords were induced to agree with them on the subject. He was not going to inflict on the House an indictment against the House of Lords. He had more than once in previous Parliaments spoken on the subject, and he had already stated his views of the recent conduct of their Lordships' House. It would be admitted that the House of Lords consisted of hereditary Peers, Bishops, and gentlemen who had been sent up some because they were brewers, some because they were bankers, some because they were rich nonentities, and some because they were failures in the House of Commons, and it was a remarkable thing that the last three Lords whom the Liberal Party had selected for this honour—Sir Hussey Vivian, Mr. Stuart Rendel, and Mr. Cyril Fowler—who, unless he was mistaken, qualified themselves for being hereditary legislators by voting for his Resolution, declaring that there ought to be no hereditary legislators in this self-governing country. These were the sort of men they made Lords. He said nothing against these gentlemen. No

doubt there were gentlemen in the other House, and no doubt they had many estimable private qualities, but unquestionably they were all from one class, and that was the capitalist class. Some had capital in land; some had capital in cash, and not only was that the case, but they were all Conservatives—and when he used the word “Conservative” he meant it entirely in the Party sense of the word. As for Radicals, if an angel were to appear from Heaven and say, as was said of the City of the Plains, that unless three just Radicals were to be found in the House of Lords the House of Lords would be destroyed, why it would be destroyed. The theory of an Upper Chamber, as he had always understood it, was to prevent hasty and impulsive legislation; to give the country time to think twice over a matter before it was absolutely decided; to step in when the Lower Chamber proceeded *ultra vires* and brought on any matter to which the country had not assented, and it also had the cardinal duty of revising Bills in a non-political sense. A worse set of men to discharge these duties than the House of Lords could not possibly be brought together. They were not independent of Party feeling or class feeling. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian in his last speech in that House said the position was intolerable. How did they understand it? Why they thought it was a call to arms. They believed they were going to fight the House of Lords, and they responded with rapturous cheers to the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian. The Leader of the Opposition frankly and fairly took up the glove; he came forward like Goliath the Philistine and defied them; he told their array that they were very brave in words, but he did not think they would be very brave in deeds. As yet the right hon. Gentleman had been right. They all anticipated immediate action—action prompt and drastic upon this matter. He would not go back beyond 1880. In that year the Liberal Party gained the elections; the country was entirely with them. A Liberal Ministry was formed, and they brought in their programme. One part of it was a Bill for the government of Ireland, a Bill providing for compensation for disturbance. What happened?

That Bill was thrown out in the House of Lords. Mr. Forster, the then Chief Secretary for Ireland, attributed all the difficulties, all the troubles, and all the outrages that ensued in Ireland to the fact that the Government having the responsibilities of Office were yet not able to carry out their own government in Ireland. In 1893 they again had the majority in the country, but what happened? During last Session three important measures had passed that House. The Home Rule Bill was passed after a long discussion, but was thrown out by the House of Lords in a day or two. The Employers' Liability Bill was so emasculated in the House of Lords that the Government thought it was not justified in going on with it after it came back with the Lords' Amendments. How was it they had been able to pass the Parish Councils Bill? Because the Duke of Devonshire told the House of Lords that it would be a serious matter for them to throw out three important measures in one Session. But they had to pass that Bill in a somewhat emasculated form. Now what was it that was proposed? One of the Bills mentioned was in reference to registration. The Duke of Devonshire had already told them he believed they meant to gerrymander the constituencies in the Registration Bill and that the Lords would take care to throw that Bill out. The Conservative Party always considered giving more power to the people as gerrymandering the constituencies. So that that Bill would only be passed by that House in order to be thrown out in the House of Lords. Then as to the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. Would any gentleman in the secrets of the House of Lords get up and say that if the Commons passed that Bill the Lords would pass it and send it up to Her Majesty for approval? They all knew perfectly well that this Session again must be absolutely wasted, because the Bills they passed would be thrown out in the House of Lords. But it might be said that after the General Election, which must occur at some time or other, the Lords would pass those Bills which they had rejected because they would see that the country was with the Commons. Not in the least; for the Lords—the Conservatives—had invented a new doctrine to meet this difficulty; they

said that the Liberals always submitted several issues to the country, and that if they got a majority it was by a species of log-rolling, one elector voting on one issue and another man on another issue : so that the real effect of the Election, no matter what the result might be, was not to show that the people were in favour of all those popular issues, but that possibly while they were in favour of one they were against another. ["Hear, hear !"] "Hear, hear," said the right hon. Gentleman opposite, but he would ask had not the Conservative Party adopted the same doctrine ? Had not they done a little log-rolling between the parsons and the beer-house keepers, the parsons looking after their loaves and fishes, and the publicans after their beer ? Every one on that side of the House, whether English, Irish, Scotch, or Welsh Representatives, desired to end the House of Lords. He was sick of seeing popular measures destroyed in the House of Lords—sick of pouring good Radical liquor into a Tory vat. They had been told it was necessary that a few more object-lessons should be presented to the country. Object-lessons they had had enough, and the Government ought to consider they had had enough. Were they not aware of the resolutions passed at so many public meetings ? Of course, it was of no use to speak to gentlemen opposite, but he could assure them there was not a single Radical in the country who was not of the opinion that there had been sufficient object-lessons for dealing with the House of Lords, and who did not desire to go in and fight it. Now, how were they acting with regard to this intolerable position ? The only way to deal with it was to put an end to the constant opposition which produced it. They wanted taken away absolutely from the House of Lords the power to interfere with the declared will of the country through its Representatives in that House. For his own part, he was in favour of the total abolition of the House of Lords. He knew of no reason why the Bishops of one particular Church in this country should for a single day longer interfere with the declared wishes of the people. It had been suggested that they ought to have a suspensory veto. He would be disposed to vote in favour of a suspensory veto provided it were Sessional ; but he

could not suppose for a moment that the Lords would be content to appear simply like rooks in a rookery—simply to caw and complain ; for there was no doubt that if the House of Commons were to decide in favour of a measure in one Session, they would not alter their opinion in the next because 500 gentlemen, who represented absolutely nobody, had protested against their action. Practically, a suspensory veto was, to all intents and purposes, the same as the abolition of the House of Lords, because it absolutely did away with their right to interfere with the decisions of the Commons. It would put a measure off for a Session, but he regarded that delay as a mere waste of time. Certainly if a measure for a suspensory veto were supported by a majority of the Members on that side of the House, he would not refuse to vote for it merely because he was himself in favour of a still larger and stronger measure for dealing with the House of Lords. Three things were absolutely essential in the settlement of the question between the House of Lords and the people of this country : first, that that House should be strengthened ; secondly, that Bills passed by the Commons should become the law of the land ; and, thirdly, that if the Commons devoted themselves to a measure urged and agitated for by people outside who called upon them to vote for it, they should make it absolutely certain that the Bill would not be rendered nugatory by the opposition of the House of Lords. They had often heard that it would require a revolution to put an end to the House of Lords, but there was nothing in the world more simple. There were Constitutional means of overcoming the resistance of that House. It had been suggested that the Government for the time being should only issue writs of summons to those Lords who were in accord with them. Well, that would not be un-Constitutional. Our old Kings were accustomed to do it, though the practice had fallen into desuetude. But, for his own part, he thought the simpler course would be to create 500 Lords.

An hon. MEMBER : And cook them in their own juice.

MR. LABOUCHERE accepted the phrase—and cook them in their own

juice. Nobody would suggest that that was un-Constitutional. In the reign of George I. a Bill was brought in to limit the power of the Crown to create Peers. That Bill was passed in the House of Lords and came down to the Commons, where it was opposed by Sir Robert Walpole and others, who based their opposition on this : if it were impossible for the Crown to create Peers in order to pass any particular measure upon which the Peers were in opposition to the will of the country, the Lords would be absolute masters of the situation ; and on that ground the Bill was thrown out. But it was unnecessary to go back to the time of George I., for in the reign of William IV., when the Reform Bill was passed, the then Prime Minister obtained permission to create a sufficient number of Peers to carry that Bill through the House of Lords ; and the mere threat created such alarm among its Members that so many of those who opposed stayed away that the Reform Bill was passed. He mentioned those facts to show that there were Constitutional precedents. His Amendment was in two parts : the first was declaratory, and the second expressed the hope that should the Lords not be inclined to yield, Her Majesty should be advised to use the Constitutional power in her hands. He was anxious to be at one with the Government in this matter ; but if for any reconдите or State reason they did not like the latter part of the Amendment, he was ready to strike it out, because really his great desire was that the essential first part of the Amendment should be passed by the House. He sincerely hoped the Amendment would not be opposed upon merely technical grounds. It could not be said to be objected to because it was not in the Address to the Crown. It was not in the Queen's Speech, but Lord Rosebery had himself informed them that the Queen's Speech was rather a setting forth of their views and putting down of the measures they anticipated would be passed during the present Session. No one could complain that this would be a Vote of Want of Confidence. As he understood it, a Vote of Want of Confidence would be if it were proposed to strike out any particular point on which their minds were bent, or to add anything with which they did not

themselves agree. Surely it was mere vanity and red-tapeism to say, "We do agree with you, but we think the moment ill-chosen—we do not like to have our beautiful Address interfered with, and we will therefore vote against you." At the present time it was most desirable that the country should be assured of the views of the Government, and upon a question of this kind it was better not to depend upon the words of this or that Minister uttered in Parliament or at a meeting in the Foreign Office, but that the House and the Government should state solemnly the views they entertained on the matter. He repeated his hope that the Government would not be prevented from accepting this Amendment on mere pedantic grounds. People outside did not understand pedantic grounds. They looked upon the Resolution as directed against the House of Lords, and it would be the greatest disappointment to Radicals outside the House if the Government refused to accept it. It would be adopted with acclamation, and had been adopted at every Liberal meeting in the country. Properly understood, this would be a Vote of Confidence in Her Majesty's Ministers. He wanted to free them from a degrading servitude to the House of Lords—to give them power to carry out their own views and their own measures. To look upon this as a Vote of Want of Confidence was as though a slave-owner, raving at a philanthropist who was seeking to strike off the chains of his slave, were to represent that the efforts of the philanthropist amounted to a Vote of Want of Confidence. He begged to move his Amendment.

MR. W. ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme) cordially seconded the Amendment which the hon. Member for Northampton had chosen a very opportune time for moving, a time when the House of Lords had abundantly proved beyond the possibility of doubt that they paid very little heed to the opinions of the Commons or the wishes of the electorate. He supported the Amendment not only on account of deeds done by the House of Lords in the past or because of the measures they had ruined during the last Session of Parliament, but because he was opposed to the principle of a Second Chamber. It was contrary to the true interests of a Democracy to permit to exist a Chamber

which had the power of vetoing measures passed by the Representatives of the people chosen by ballot at the polling-booths. The electorate were convinced that the Liberal policy was right and wise, and by their votes sent a Liberal majority to that House; but the measures passed there in the interests of the people had to pass through the burning, fiery furnace of the House of Lords. Those measures had to go before a body of hereditary legislators who had not been chosen for their fitness to represent anybody, but were in their places by mere accident of birth. Lord Rosebery could not see why that accident of birth should prevent a man serving his country in any position; but there was no reason why that mere accident should enable a man to sit in a Second Chamber, and should give him the power of criticising and destroying Bills passed by the Commons. The Leader of the Opposition said the other night that throughout the whole civilised world existed the principle of a Second Chamber; but surely the whole civilised world was at liberty to progress, and to shape its requirements according to the altered conditions of changing time. Forms of Government surely should not be made in a cast-iron mould—unalterable. Government should be as perfect a machine as could be devised, and if it was to properly perform the work required of it should have all the latest improvements. Existing forms might have answered in the past, but surely when a Government had to drop its measures because there was not the least chance of passing them, the time had come when legislation must be accelerated. That would be done by taking from the Second Chamber its veto, and no longer allowing it to throw out the measures the Commons had passed. Take the example of last Session. Several important measures had been passed by the Commons. The House of Lords had rejected them. That House threw out the Home Rule Bill, which had in the Commons occupied a time so long that it was unexampled in the history of Parliament. They destroyed the Employers' Liability Bill and the Scotch Fisheries Bill. The House of Peers thought they were better able to form a correct opinion of the real requirements of the

working classes than the Representatives of the people themselves, and by their action last Session had vastly increased the difficulties of legislation. But it was not only during last Session; they had been constantly doing the same thing for the last 100 years. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who was now acting in concert with the other side of the House, had said

"that during the last 100 years the House of Lords had never contributed one iota to popular liberty and freedom; that they had done nothing to advance the commonweal, and had denied justice and reform;"

and he instanced the Irish Land Act of 1870, the Compensation for Disturbance Act, the Act of 1880, and the more important parts of the Land Act of 1881, all of which they had thrown out. No one would deny that the Irish Land Question lay at the very root of Irish difficulties, and the House of Lords, by their action in mutilating and rejecting those Bills, had done much towards widening and deepening them. On the other hand, when, in 1882, the House of Lords had to consider a Coercion Bill, they managed to rush it through all its stages in one Sitting. When they had before them any Bill to ameliorate the condition of the Irish people they seemed to revel in its destruction. They were always out of tune with any measure of freedom. It was unnecessary to go into what that House had done in regard to land legislation and ecclesiastical and social reforms; but he must call attention to the way they had treated Bills to reform the representation in the Commons. One would have thought the House of Commons would be the proper body to determine the constituencies and electors by which it should be chosen. Going back for a moment to 1830, he found that a number of the electors of Newark complained that the Duke of Newcastle had controlled the election in their borough, and the answer given by the Duke to their Petition was—"May I not do what I like with my own?" And still at the present time, after all the old means of influencing the electors had been swept away, much the same feelings and ideas were manifested by the Tory House of Lords. It seemed to him that the elected Representatives of the country were capable

of legislating for the people without the intervention of the other House. In 1871 the House of Lords rejected the Ballot Bill, which was introduced to enable electors secretly to choose their Representatives and to secure purity of election. But the Lords cared nothing for that, they delayed the necessary reform as long as they dared, and they only gave way because the voice of the country and of the House of Commons was most pronounced against them. Even then they gave way most ungraciously. The Chief Secretary for Ireland once told the country that the Lords were never to be found on the side of justice, and he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that the history of the last 50 years furnished a most damning record of their actions. By their conduct they were reducing Parliamentary Government to a farce. One of the old cries of the Liberal Party was "Government by the people for the people," and if they meant to stick to that they could not do otherwise than vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton. It was nothing more than a snare, a sham, and a delusion to say that the people were being governed by the people when these hereditary legislators were enabled thus to control the action of the House of Commons. The House of Lords was a House composed of great dignitaries of the Church and of men who held a position by accident of birth, and they were now as much out of sympathy with the people as ever they were. The Peers, in fact, were now the mere puppets of one man, their Party Leader, who put a penny in the slot and the machine worked. For these reasons he most cordially seconded the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words—

"And we humbly pray Your Majesty that the power now enjoyed by persons not elected to Parliament by the possessors of the Parliamentary franchise to prevent Bills being submitted to Your Majesty for Your Royal approval shall cease, and we respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary, Your Majesty will, with and by the advice of Your responsible Ministers, use the power vested in Your Majesty to secure the passing of this much-needed reform."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

SIR W. HARCOURT: I need hardly say, with regard to the views which my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton takes of the course adopted by the House of Lords, not only this year, but in many preceding years, towards Bills passed by the House of Commons—I need not say how entirely I concur with the language and with the principles laid down by the late Prime Minister on this subject. He has said that it is one of the great subjects of the present time; he has said it is one which will occupy the attention of this House and of the nation in a most serious manner, and that it is quite impossible that the state of things—I am speaking not of this Bill or that, but of a long-continued series of actions by the House of Lords in rejecting and in mutilating Liberal measures which are sent up by the House of Commons, and which are approved of by the great majority of the nation—is a state of things which ought not and cannot continue. In that we are entirely agreed, and upon that view we mean to proceed. But the question I have to ask myself is, whether or not I can vote for or support the Resolution moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton. I do not quite understand at what my hon. Friend aims. He begins by humbly praying Her Majesty that the power now enjoyed by the House of Lords shall cease. But then how is Her Majesty to make that power cease? That is assuming a power in the Crown—[*Mr. Labouchere dissented.*] Well, that is what the Amendment states.

MR. LABOUCHERE: May I explain? Her Majesty has responsible Ministers, and no doubt acts by their advice. Therefore when I used the words "Her Majesty," it was the mere technical form used in the Address for Her Majesty's responsible Ministers. I should like them to bring in a Bill.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is not what my hon. Friend has said. What he has said in this Resolution is that he prays the Crown to put an end to the House of Lords. That is a proposition which he can hardly, I should imagine, expect the Government, or indeed any Member of the Liberal Party, to vote for. Then he proceeds in the second part to say that—

"We respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary,"

that is a curious qualification, but I suppose he has made up his mind that it is necessary—

“Your Majesty will, with and by the advice of your responsible Ministers,”

there he introduces responsible Ministers, but not in the first part—

“use the power vested in Your Majesty to secure the passing of this much-needed reform.”

Well, then, my hon. Friend says that that means the creation of 500 Peers. But in the beginning of his speech he rather objected to the few Peers that had been created, and he passed rather a censure upon the Peers who had been made recently. His views, however, are more extensive, and he desires, I presume, that the result of the passing of the Amendment should be that to-morrow or next week there should be 500 Peers created on the spot. I suppose that my hon. Friend has his list ready.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I have a list of stalwarts, who will sacrifice themselves for a short time, in order to destroy themselves as Peers and their brother Peers.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have no doubt my hon. Friend has his list ready, but is he prepared to guarantee that they are stalwart?

MR. LABOUCHERE: Yes.

SIR W. HARCOURT: But before we are committed to a policy of that character I think the House will see that we should consider whether the method my hon. Friend proposes is a practicable one. I do not desire to pursue these criticisms on what, after all, is a very serious matter. I do ask hon. Gentlemen who feel with me to remember that we are debating a very serious subject, in which every step ought to be most carefully considered, and that the spirit in which we must proceed in a matter of this kind, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian has impressed upon us, ought to be one of grave deliberation, and we ought not to embark on a Resolution of this character, which in my opinion will not tend to advance the object which my hon. Friend has at heart. If my hon. Friend has not confidence in Her Majesty's Government—I do not know whether he has—

MR. LABOUCHERE: None.

Sir W. Harcourt

SIR W. HARCOURT: So I understand; and that being so, I hope those who have a more benevolent view of Her Majesty's Government than my hon. Friend takes will be disposed to trust them to consider and deal with a question of this gravity and importance, and to bring under the consideration of the House and of the nation the manner and the measures which we think proper for advancing a matter in which we are as deeply interested as in my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 147; Noes 145.—(Division List, No. 2.)

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

FINANCES OF INDIA.

*SIR G. CHESNEY (Oxford) said, he was afraid the empty Benches of the House were rather illustrative of the degree of interest that was taken in our fellow-subjects in India; but, at any rate, it illustrated a point he would endeavour to submit to the House. Complaints had been made of various omissions in the Speech from the Throne, and amongst the different subjects which had not been touched on, perhaps it was not remarkable to find England's greatest Dependency. But there might be, and he believed there was, sufficient reason for that significant omission in the fact that at this very time Her Majesty's Government had inflicted—he did not say that they were thoroughly aware of what they were doing—a great wrong and injustice upon the people of India. No doubt the House and the country were familiar with the leading circumstances connected with the present financial condition of India. They were aware that while the Government of India received its revenues in silver, it had very large fixed liabilities for payment in this country in gold, and that, with a constantly accelerated depreciation of silver as compared with gold, the burden of silver payments was constantly increasing. Under these circumstances, which brought about a very remarkable and acute stage of financial difficulty, the Indian Government naturally acceded with alacrity to the in-

vation of the different Governments of Europe and America to combine and agree upon some common scheme of action for restoring silver to a better position with respect to gold. He was not going to inflict on the House an attempt at an essay on bimetallism. He would only observe, or note, a notorious fact that he presumed no one would have the hardihood to controvert—namely, that whether or not that International meeting of financiers might or might not have led to some successful measure, at any rate, the Government of this country not only gave no definite assistance to the Government of India, but threw difficulties in its way. It was notorious that the unfructuous result of the Conference was due almost entirely to the hostile attitude assumed towards it by the English Government. On that point he apprehended there was no doubt. The result was, that silver went lower and lower without any remedy being applied, and then the Indian Government, as a last resource, proposed that the Mints should be closed, and that, as a necessary corollary, the Secretary of State, instead of continuing to sell his bills in the open market by auction to the highest bidder, must stop the sale of them—at any rate, that he must put a fixed limit on them below which they would not be offered for sale. It was anticipated that in this way, at any rate, stability would be given to the rupee, and that its further fall would be retarded. That expectation was undoubtedly fulfilled for so long as that policy was pursued. The Mints were still closed; but almost in the middle of the experiment, for some reason or other with which the outdoor public were not acquainted, and which both the outer and the inner public were absolutely unable to understand—it was equally a mystery to the monetary interests in the City—the Secretary of State appeared suddenly to have lost heart, to have given way, and to have begun again to open the auction sale of his bills. The result was a still further alarming fall in the gold price of the rupee, with, of course, the necessary consequence of a very large increase of the silver burden of the Government of India; and as a result of this, for the present financial year, at a time when India was prosperous in itself, after a good harvest, and in a time of general

peace—with no special or abnormal expenditure—the Government of India had got to face the beginning of the financial year, with all the unknown liabilities that might come on it—and who could say what they would be?—with a deficit of $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees, or, in conventional sterling, of £3,500,000. Under these circumstances, the only resource open to the Indian Government was extra taxation in some form or other. To have allowed the deficit to go on with the prospect of a probably recurring deficit next year would have been—to say the least of it—a very disreputable line of action. But when the House came to consider the question of taxation in India, it was confronted with difficulties on every side. The great staple item of taxation was the land, and the land was settled all over India either in perpetuity or on long leases, so that a sudden increase of revenue by the raising of the Land Tax was impracticable, even if it would not be highly dishonest to increase the charges on one particular class of the people. The Income Tax touched only a very small proportion of the community in India. Any tax to be productive in India must be collected from the great bulk of the people, and the Salt Tax, which fulfilled this condition, was undoubtedly already as high as in fairness it could be carried. No doubt every person connected with the Indian Government desired, above everything, to lower the Salt Duties. Under these circumstances, almost the only course open to the Government was to obtain the necessary revenue for covering the deficit by imposing Import Duties on goods which went into India. It so happened that the very moderate general Import Duty of 5 per cent.—in no sense a Protective Duty—on all Indian imports would realise almost precisely the sum of £3,500,000, which was required to bring about financial equilibrium. Although the Government of India had not distinctly said it was their intention to place a 5 per cent. duty on all classes of commodities, it was an open secret that this was their desire. It was equally an open secret that while they had been allowed to impose a 5 per cent. duty on everything else, cotton goods, which formed the largest article of importation, had been ex-

cluded from the new duty. Every other description of goods was to be taxed, but cotton goods were to remain untaxed. This action, which of course emanated from the Home Government, had created a very remarkable and extraordinary amount of excitement and indignation in India. He had no recollection during his long connection with India of any circumstance about which all classes, British or native, who were capable of forming a judgment on the matter at all, had been so much united as they had been upon this one. They knew that if any taxation could be said to be acceptable to the people of India, this was a form which would be acceptable. They knew that the 5 per cent. duty had only a very moderate effect upon the price of the article imported, that its incidence would be almost imperceptible, and that unless such an Import Duty were raised there would be a deficit which must sooner or later be covered by some other and more objectionable form of taxation. They knew, moreover, that the attitude of the Indian Government towards India was one which it would not venture to adopt towards the humblest of our colonies. It might be said that India was not in the position of a colony, that it was not a free country, that it had not got Representative Institutions. That was true; but surely it was the more reason why Great Britain should exercise the greatest forbearance, and even the greatest delicacy, in dealing with additions to Indian taxation. It had often happened, no doubt, that the British Government had interfered with the customs of the people of India, but it had only done so when it had felt that those customs were repugnant to the morality of the Western world, and in response to the appeals of the Government on the spot, and in harmony with the wishes of the more educated and liberal classes in that country. It was obvious and notorious that the action now being taken was taken in opposition to the wishes of the Government of India and to the wishes and feelings of all classes in that country. There was no question now of higher morality; it was simply a question of interfering with the fiscal rights of India in the interest of British manufacturers. There was evidence of this in the report which appeared in the

papers of the deputation which waited on the late Secretary of State (the Earl of Kimberley) to protest against the levying of a duty on cotton goods. Anyone who read that report must have sympathised with the Secretary of State, as far as one could sympathise with a man who did a wrong thing, because it was so obvious that he was acting against his own convictions, and because he had not a word of argument or excuse to offer. He (Sir G. Chesney) would appeal to every friend of India in the House to support the Amendment, and so to let the people of India see that they had in the House of Commons those who would see justice done to them. Everyone was well aware what mischief and injury was done in former years by our high-handed and foolish commercial policy, and how, in order to support what was supposed to be the benefit of British industry, colonies were exploited, and the manufacturing industries of Ireland were allowed to wither up. It would now be said that both sides of the House were actuated by a higher morality. If that were the case, was the present Government going to resort to the old vicious system of commercial oppression over again? Everyone knew that the action now being taken was due to the desire to buy off the agitation of a certain Party in the House. It was said that if any other course were adopted Manchester would make things too hot for the Government. No one would wish to injure Manchester, which represented Lancashire, one of the largest and most patriotic sections of the country. Whilst he appealed to the higher motives of Lancashire, he felt at the same time that the imposition of this trifling duty would not really appreciably affect Manchester trade. Even if it should do so, it would be far better in the long run for Manchester and for England that it should cause some present loss, rather than that a policy should be adopted which would tend permanently to excite a feeling of hostility, and to alienate the sentiments of the people of India from Great Britain. He believed that our political connection with India was of a very fragile character. He did not mean that we could not if we chose hold that country in subjection, but he said that if we were to govern India not by brutal military force, but on the same principles

Sir G. Chesney

of government as were applied to ourselves, it would be well not to allow the people of India to feel that we were legislating not in their interests but in our own. There was even now, he thought, a way for the Government out of the false position in which they had placed themselves. If it were thought that the imposition of a duty on cotton goods would give a preferential advantage to Indian-made goods, it was open to the Government to meet the objection by imposing an Excise Duty on Indian manufactures. He did not think it would be a happy or a very creditable thing to do; but, at any rate, it would get over one of the most palpable objections, and enable the Government to escape from their present false position. He begged to move his Amendment.

*MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) said, he would second the Amendment. Though he was deeply interested in the cotton manufacture, and though all his interests were very much opposed to the levying of a duty on cotton in India, he could not help feeling that the financial position of India rendered such a course necessary. He was bound to associate himself with the remarks that had fallen from the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, as he was quite confident they were exciting in India a strong feeling against the Government here, and, looking at the dreadful condition into which Indian finance had fallen, he thought they were entitled to give a free hand to the Government of India. At the present moment the financial state of India was worse than had been the case for many years, and he did not think the House quite realised what a serious condition of things there was in India. By artificial means they were able to keep up the value of the rupee at 1s. 2d., but the value of it in bullion was only 10½d.; and who could have any confidence that they would be able to maintain the exchange in India at that artificial rate for much longer? So far it had simply been kept up by the Indian Government refusing to sell bills, but they would have to sell continuously now in order to preserve the Indian Government from bankruptcy; within the next 12 months they would have to sell an amount equivalent to £19,000,000 sterling. He himself apprehended a very great fall in the rate of exchange in the near future, and should

not be surprised if the rupee in India in the next year or two fell to 10d. There was but one logical, real, and substantial remedy for that state of things. The Indian Government had pressed upon the Home Government for very many years—only to be treated with contempt—the necessity of this country joining other nations in Europe and the United States of America in reverting to the old system that gave them a fixed exchange in India for 70 years. Unless that were done, he believed that even the financial genius of his right hon. Friend would not be able to prevent the Indian Government getting into something like bankruptcy. He believed that the proposal now before the House was but a feeble attempt to grapple with the difficulty, but still it was an attempt that should be made. However, he could only give a qualified adhesion to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman. Considering that Lancashire had scarcely been able to hold its head above water for the last 10 years, and that there had been an almost total absence of profit in carrying on the great cotton trade, it would be out of the question for a Free Trade country like England to impose a duty which would protect Indian cotton goods; therefore he claimed that a corresponding Excise Duty should be put on Indian goods. With this explanation he begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,

"And humbly to represent to Your Majesty that this House has learnt with regret the determination of Your Majesty's advisers, contrary to the wishes of the people of India, to restrain the Government of that country from taking the measures proposed by them for meeting the deficit in their revenues; and that, in the opinion of this House, such a disregard of the feelings and interests of the people of India is at variance with the principles which should regulate our conduct towards them."—(*Sir G. Chesney.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I am rather sorry, Sir, this question has been raised to-night, not merely on personal grounds—though I only took possession of the Office yesterday morning—but rather on the ground of public convenience. The Government, through my right hon. Friend the

Chancellor of the Exchequer, have already promised that after Easter they will find a day for the full discussion of Indian finances, and during the small time that has already been consumed this evening the hon. Members who moved and seconded this Amendment have dipped, to some extent, into the currency question, and raised that difficult subject. I think it would have been better if we could have adjourned the whole of this question until the day that is to be devoted to Indian finances had been reached. At all events, it will be my duty, in a very imperfect manner, to meet the case so far as I can this evening. The hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite has used a rather strong expression; he has described the action of the Government—that is, the Home Government as distinguished from the Government of India—as having done a great wrong and injustice to the people of India, and has also spoken of commercial oppression. That is a very grave charge to bring against the Indian Executive in England, and I must endeavour, for a moment or two, to submit to the House two or three considerations which I will ask hon. Members fairly to regard before they accept a Motion founded on such a theory. If a wrong and injustice in this case have been done to the people of India it must be by inflicting either excessive or unjust taxation. The hon. Gentleman opposite will not quarrel with that interpretation of his position. It would be a wrong and unjust thing to levy unjust taxation, but the point we have to consider is whether the action of the Home Government has been to inflict either the one or the other.

*SIR G. CHESNEY: My objection was that the Government here have not allowed the Indian Government to impose taxation according to the wishes of India, and the question of whether the taxation is just or whether there be none was not raised.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The hon. and gallant Gentleman will admit the Imperial Government is responsible for the taxation of India, and it will be my duty to explain how the matter stands, and to submit that the charge of inflicting a wrong and injustice upon India has not been proved. I must ask the House to recall the fact that this is not a new question; this is an old con-

troversy, and has been the result of long and careful consideration both in India and England, and I was sorry to hear the hon. and gallant Gentleman say the action of my predecessor was influenced by Party motives, and that the conduct of the Executive here in disallowing that proposed taxation was influenced by Party considerations and the desire to propitiate a certain class of votes in this House. Whether the action has been right or wrong, it has had the judgment of the House of Commons confirmed by Secretaries of State belonging to both political Parties, after a great deal of discussion on the matter. I would like to remind the House that this important question of cotton goods was discussed by Lord Salisbury in his Despatch of the 15th of July, 1875, and he then drew the attention of the Government of India to the effect of the duty on the coarser class of cotton goods. Later in the same year he returned to the subject; he explained it in an exceedingly able argument, and referred to this Import Duty as preventing the importation of an article of the first necessity, and tending to operate as a Protective Duty in favour of the native manufacturer. Lord Salisbury in 1875 was of opinion it was impracticable to levy a duty on the imports of cotton from Lancashire. Even then, when the production of native cotton was less than it is now, Lord Salisbury spoke of it as a "Protective Duty in favour of a native manufacture," and he went on—

"It is thus inconsistent with the policy which Parliament, after very mature deliberation, has sanctioned, and which on that account it is not open to Her Majesty's Government to allow to be set aside without special cause in any part of the Empire under their direct control. The speedy removal," in the opinion of Lord Salisbury, "was a matter of serious importance both to Indian and Imperial interests."

I am not going to trouble the House with a history of this matter, but a Resolution was passed in 1877 in favour of the abolition of these duties, and the Government of the day, then represented by the noble Lord the late First Lord of the Admiralty, one of the Members for Middlesex (Lord G. Hamilton), added to that Resolution that the duties should be repealed

"so soon as the financial condition of India will permit."

No doubt the question is a fair one to be

raised on the financial condition of India. Eventually, in 1879—and I wish to call attention particularly to this point—the House of Commons passed a Resolution—

“That the Indian Import Duty on cotton goods, being unjust alike to the Indian consumer and the English producer, ought to be abolished, and this House accepts the recent reduction in these duties as a step towards their total abolition, to which Her Majesty's Government are pledged.”

I would here remark that where Parliament has, after protracted discussion, arrived at a distinct Resolution as to the policy that ought to be pursued in respect of this duty in India, it would not be open to the Executive Government to take a step reversing that decision without the matter being discussed in this House. A few years afterwards Sir Evelyn Baring repealed the whole of the Import Duties on cotton, and I would like to ask the House what has been the effect of that repeal? Has it been an injustice in any way to the people of India; has it interfered with the development of the Indian cotton trade—and I regard this as an essential condition of the prosperity of the people—has it interfered with the native production; has the unrestricted competition of Lancashire produced an injurious effect on Indian trade? I would ask the permission of the House just to give two or three figures. In 1881-2, the year before the duties were repealed, the exports of Indian twist and yarn amounted to the value of 1,369,000 tens of rupees. In 1892-3 the value of the exports was 6,773,000 tens of rupees. That is as to twist and yarn. If we come to piece goods of Indian manufacture, the amount exported from India in 1881-2 was 642,000 tens of rupees; last year it was 1,327,000 tens of rupees. Therefore, so far as that part of the argument is concerned, I think the House will see there has been no injury inflicted on the manufacturers of India by exposing them to unrestricted competition. And I might mention, as further proof of that point, that there were 62 cotton mills in India at that time, and now there are 130; then there were 1,654,000 spindles, now there are 3,378,000; then there were 15,000 looms, now there are 26,000. That is proof that the removal of these duties, putting India on unrestrictive terms so far as competition is concerned with

Lancashire, has done India no harm. Then the hon. and gallant Gentleman spoke of the deficit being an open secret, but I am under the impression that his figures are like many open secrets—liable to considerable modification. I hope, when the Budget Statement is made, there will not be such a deficit as he appears to anticipate. I admit that the Government has declined to sanction the imposition of Import Duties on cotton goods. The essence of this controversy, I venture to submit to the House, is, are these duties Revenue Duties or are they Protective Duties? The hon. Gentleman behind me who seconded the Amendment gave the point away at once, when he said he would be no party to the imposition of any Protective Duties whatever. I admit there ought to be no discrimination between two classes of goods. A discrimination in favour of goods from any part of Her Majesty's Dominions would be unjust and unfair. But I rather put to the House the real nature of this duty as the main influential reasons guiding the conduct of the Home Executive? I take it to be the distinction between Revenue Duty and Protective Duty, that the former, being raised for the purposes of Revenue, is imposed upon all articles alike, whether they are made at home or whether they are imported from abroad. But if you put a duty simply upon goods imported from abroad, and not the same duty upon goods manufactured at home, that is a Protective Duty. What is the practical effect of that? If the proposals of the Indian Government were carried out, and a duty was levied upon all cotton goods imported from abroad, and no duty put upon the cotton manufactured in India, the full amount of duty would have to be paid by the Indian consumer, because the Indian manufacturer would raise his prices to within an almost inappreciable difference of the amount of duty placed upon foreign goods. He would leave just so small a margin as would secure him the market, and therefore, practically, the consumer would pay the duty on all the goods. The result of that is that, in that case, the duty paid does not go into the Exchequer; it goes into the pocket of the native producer; and what we say is that taxation would be levied upon the consumer, not for the benefit of the Revenue,

but for the benefit of a particular class. It therefore must be seen that to charge the Government with acting unjustly to the people of India is not strictly correct. What is the extent of the present Indian manufactures? I have some extraordinary figures that I will give to the House showing the amount of cotton goods made in India and exported from India. I am not dealing for the moment with the home consumption in India, which is a considerable item in addition. Taking the average of the last three years, I find that the exports from the United Kingdom into India of yarn and twist averaged 42,000,000 lbs., whilst the exports from India to other countries amounted to 173,000,000 lbs. Taking the manufacture of piece goods, I find that the exports from the United Kingdom to India for the three years averaged 1,858,000,000 yards, whilst the exports from India averaged 73,000,000 yards. Without going into elaborate calculations, I think I can say that a considerable proportion of the goods consumed in India are manufactured in that country, whilst there is a growing export trade from that country to China and Japan. The suggestion that a countervailing duty could be imposed on cotton goods in India is one that cannot be adopted without consideration. I should like to point out that there is, as it seems to me, one difficulty in the way. It is doubtful whether in the Native States an Excise Duty could be imposed. If, therefore, it was imposed upon manufactures in British territory, we might be giving a Protective Duty to the manufactures in the Native States. That is one of the questions, but there are other matters which will have to be very carefully considered before a decision is arrived at. Under these circumstances, I am not prepared to admit that the Government have acted either unfairly to India, or that they have sacrificed the interests of India to the interests of the British manufacturer. The hon. and gallant Member said we ought to be very forbearing in our dealings with India, and with that remark I cordially concur. The whole matter, however, is one of great difficulty. It is difficult to apply rigidly to a country like India the same financial principles that guide our fiscal arrangements here. I think, however, with regard to India as

to any other country, we should adopt the principle of not protecting one class at the expense of the whole community, and that is a principle of sound justice, wise justice, and true economy. The Government in the course they have taken, and of which the hon. and gallant Gentleman complains, have been influenced by that consideration, and by that consideration alone. The latest telegram which was sent to India by my predecessor intimated to the Indian Government that Her Majesty's Government were not prepared to make a final decision, that they regarded the difficulties in this case as great, and that they would be prepared to receive further representations on the subject before coming to such final decision. I think that is a course which the House will see is a wise and a prudent course. Her Majesty's Government are influenced solely by the desire to do justice to the people of India; to protect the consumers in India, which means the general bulk of the population, and not in any way to prejudice or fetter the trade of India; and in so doing we are carrying out the policy which this House so wisely described as in the interests alike of the Indian consumer and the English producer. In these circumstances I hope the hon. and gallant Gentleman will not press his Motion to a Division. He has raised, and raised with very great ability and fairness, a question on which he is a very competent authority. I can assure him that the whole question will receive at the India Office the most careful and anxious consideration, and there is no other desire there than to do justice to the people of India and promote their prosperity—both financial and social.

*MR. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central) had no intention of taking part in this discussion. He would, however, thank the Proposer and Seconder of the Amendment for taking up this subject and saying what they had said. He did not agree with a large portion of their remarks, but he did not desire at this stage to enter into the discussion for two reasons: first, because the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised them a day for the complete discussion of the finances of India; and second, because these partial discussions always led to some un-

fortunate misunderstanding and unsatisfactory results.

Question put, and negatived.

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

DR. J. KENNY (Dublin, College Green), in rising to move the following Amendment :—

"And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that the time has come when the cases of all prisoners convicted under the Treason Felony Act who are and have been for many years undergoing punishment for offences arising out of insurrectionary movements connected with Ireland, may be advantageously reconsidered,"

said, he regretted that the hon. and learned Member for Waterford (Mr. J. Redmond), in whose name the Amendment stood, was precluded from moving it, as the hon. Member would have dealt with a matter of so much importance in a far abler manner than he could hope to do. He desired, in the first place, to repudiate in the most emphatic terms any idea that those who took an interest in this question were animated by political motives. He would consider any one man or any party of men who would embark into a question involving so deeply the interests of humanity simply for political purposes as guilty of a crime, and he desired to repudiate all such suggestions as monstrous and unreal. It was to him a matter of profound surprise and regret that whilst there existed in this House a party of Members from Ireland, all of them professing a deep interest in this question, with the power to enforce their views if their will was equal to their power, yet, notwithstanding that, it should be necessary for them to bring forward this Motion Session after Session. A year, however, had elapsed since a similar Motion was last brought before the House. Therefore, a year more of punishment had been inflicted on the men in whose interest the Amendment was brought forward, and that in itself added weight to this appeal for clemency. The present Motion was based on the highest prerogative that could be exercised—namely, that of mercy. The first question was, was the definition given in the Amendment fulfilled by the persons in whose interests it was brought forward? That was to say, were they political prisoners? He did not think anyone who had given

attention to the subject could for a moment doubt that they were political offenders who were undergoing imprisonment for offences of a political character. He was sorry that the Home Secretary in his speeches in the House and elsewhere had cast doubt on the reality of their position in that respect. If the right hon. Gentleman was of that opinion he could at any rate appeal from him to the Chief Secretary for Ireland to show that in the estimation of the latter right hon. Gentleman these men were political offenders and nothing else. During the time of the General Election the right hon. Member for Newcastle, in reply to a deputation of Irishmen who waited upon him in reference to this question, used these words—

"We are endeavouring to bring the old system of Irish Government completely to an end. When we have succeeded in these efforts then will be the time to consider whether the British Government would not be well advised as incidental to that momentous settlement of national accounts to show the same spirit of clemency towards these prisoners as was shown, for example, by the Government of the French Republic towards the exiled communists. Such at least is my judgment, and I beg you to convey it to your friends."

What meaning could possibly be derived from these words but that the right hon. Gentleman did believe they were political offenders, and that at the moment of closing the blood-stained and tragic accounts between the two nations it would be a proper and right act to amnesty these men? Why, if they were not political offenders, would the settlement of the national accounts involve a general gaol delivery? If anyone ought to be anxious for a settlement of this amnesty question outside the Irish Members it was the Chief Secretary, because he did raise in the minds of the Irish people by his Leinster Hall speech the definite idea that he regarded these prisoners as political offenders, who should be amnestied. He knew the right hon. Gentleman had repudiated such a meaning being placed on his words, and had said that he meant a general amnesty for old feuds; but that was not the impression created on the minds of the Irish people, who took the right hon. Gentleman's language to mean that one of his first acts would be to obtain the release of these persons. The right hon. Gentleman admitted it would be right to amnesty these men on the occasion of

closing the accounts. If that be so, was it not within the power of the Government at the present moment to close the national accounts on this subject? What was the use of keeping it open as a sore between the two nations, or between a section even of the Irish Nationalists and the British Government? That seemed to be an illogical position. If it was right that there should be a closing and settlement of the national account, why should they still keep open these items in the account, which would be a source of irritation and do no good to anyone? Supposing certain of these men had escaped to America or France, and that the Government had demanded from the French or American Government their extradition, would that demand have been listened to? No, they would have been told that the offence was a political offence, and did not come within the class of offences for which extradition could be demanded. The men, on whose behalf he was appealing, were tried not for the possession of the dynamite or creating dynamite explosions. And here let him say that he and his friends wished it to be distinctly understood now—as they had often stated before—that with dynamite and its methods they had no sort of sympathy or community whatever, but detested them as much as anyone could, and should continue to teach their fellow-countrymen that they were bitterly opposed to such methods. The prisoners in question were tried under the Treason Felony Act of 1848, and got sentences of penal servitude for life, which could not have been imposed had they been tried under the Explosives Act. Let them contrast for a moment what occurred between two sets of prisoners, some of whom were convicted under the Treason Felony Act and others under the Explosives Act. The two sets of prisoners were, by a coincidence, tried by the same Judge. In the case of the Walsall prisoners, who were tried under the Explosives Act, Mr. Justice Hawkins commented on the enormity of the crime of which these men were guilty—namely, that of a conspiracy to cause explosions of a most atrocious character, and directed against the most innocent of the community, and yet when he came to sentence them he awarded them punishments ranging from 5 to 10 years,

the latter being the highest sentence he passed. What would have been the case of the political prisoners who in 1888 were tried by the same Judge under the Treason Felony Act had they got sentences of this character? The majority of them would have been out by this time. If justice was to be respected it should be even-handed. Daly, Egan, and the other men were tried and convicted under the Treason Felony Act. They were sentenced in the spirit of vindictiveness, which at that time prevailed in England, and were awarded punishment not for treason-felony, but for the possession of dynamite in some cases, although in one case it was clear there was no such possession. He entreated the Home Secretary not to give a cut-and-dried answer. There must be some reason given for this inequality of sentences; the men who were convicted of the lesser crime being dealt with far more severely than those who were guilty of atrocious offences. As to Daly, though he was known to be an extreme Nationalist, he was a man of high honour, and one who would not stoop to mean actions to carry out the designs he openly avowed. There was no doubt in the mind of any man who had studied Daly's trial and the circumstances connected with it that the Irish police did plant, by means of an agent, the bombs which were found in Daly's possession. If the Home Secretary doubted that, he would ask the right hon. Gentleman what had become of the man who, as they believed, lured Daly from Birmingham to Liverpool, who, after Daly's conviction, had disappeared, and never since been heard of, and who would have no reason on earth to disappear from Liverpool, where he was doing a lucrative business, if he had not been a provoking agent of the Irish police, and acting at their instigation? He was sorry to see the right hon. Gentleman seemed to find this a subject for amusement. There were the statements of Alderman Manton and Inspector Farndale, of Birmingham, on this subject; and although the Home Secretary and his predecessor in Office cast doubts on such statements, neither Mr. Manton nor Mr. Farndale had ever repudiated them. Mr. Farndale ought not to be retained for a moment in his position if the statement he had made was not well-founded,

and if he had not been able to convince the Watch Committee of Birmingham of its truth. That statement was most specific. It was that he, who was the officer that had Daly under observation since he came to England, knew that the bombs found in his possession when he was arrested had been planted on him by an agent of the Irish police. That agent was the man in Liverpool named O'Neill. It was a very suspicious circumstance that the police officer from Ireland who was able to recognise Daly, and see that his pockets were full of bombs, happened to be at the railway station, where Daly was arrested, though the English Inspector stated at the trial that from the time Daly arrived in Liverpool until he was arrested the English police had lost sight of him and did not know where he was. On all these grounds he renewed his appeal to the Home Secretary to take seriously into consideration whether it was worth while to keep these men in prison, and who it was he would please by doing so. If it were the Opposition the right hon. Gentleman thought to please he could not expect any gratitude from them. The right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues had in contemplation a great scheme for healing the differences between England and Ireland. Let them release those men, and remove thereby one of the grievances which they had power to remove, while it was not in their power to relieve the greatest grievance. The hon. Member concluded by moving his Amendment.

*MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's) seconded the Amendment. He did so for two reasons—first, because he was obliged by his constituents to do so; and secondly, because of the hopes that were raised in the minds of the Irish people by certain right hon. Gentlemen, who now sat on the Ministerial Benches, before they came into Office. He disclaimed any sympathy whatever with crime. However, it was useful to remember that at the time these crimes were committed the circumstances of Ireland were entirely different. Liberal Ministers might not desire to have their memories refreshed with regard to those events; but he should point out that even when a Liberal Government was in power public meetings were proclaimed, Associations were suppressed, and

coercion was rampant in Ireland. These men were tried in a time of panic, and were convicted on evidence which would not have been satisfactory if they had been charged with other offences. Under the circumstances, the Government first made these men criminals and then punished them for being what the Government had made them. That might seem a strange assertion, but it was true. Crime was the natural outcome of oppression; these men raised their voices against oppression in the only way that was then open to them, and it was the Government which made that state of things possible that should bear the responsibility. He would remind right hon. Gentlemen also that there was no life lost in any of the outrages and very little property was destroyed. Besides, the men were tried under the Treason Felony Act, and were political prisoners pure and simple. Amnesty was recognised by all civilised nations except Russia. And were British Ministers going to adopt the code of acknowledged despotism? The battle-cry at the elections in Ireland had been that the evicted tenants were to be put in and the political prisoners let out. There had been 18 months' talk, and absolutely no result. In the words of Shakspeare, "It was sound and fury, signifying nothing." They were face to face with the fact that the Government had dropped one plank in their political programme and cast another adrift on the waters of the future. But he warned the Government that this subject would not be lost sight of, and if they did not give a more sympathetic consideration in favour of amnesty it would probably tell against their success at the next General Election. That was a consideration that generally had more weight with right hon. Gentlemen in Office than anything else that could be brought forward.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question to add the words—

"And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that the time has come when the cases of all prisoners convicted under the Treason Felony Act who are and have been for many years undergoing punishment for offences arising out of insurrectionary movements connected with Ireland, may be advantageously reconsidered."
—(Dr. Kenny.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. J. REDMOND said, he was anxious to intervene for a few moments in the Debate before the Home Secretary delivered the reply of the Government. He was conscious of the fact that the circumstances of the time constituted a difficulty in the way of the favourable consideration of this question by the House. It was undoubted that the recent outbreak of the forces of anarchy in different countries on the Continent was calculated to close the ears of a great many people against any appeal for mercy on the part of men who were supposed, rightly or wrongly, to have been connected in the past with crimes of this character. He recognised frankly that this feeling was a difficulty in the way of the Amendment, but disputed altogether the justice and the logic of that feeling. If they could make out a fair case for the reconsideration of some of these cases it would be illogical and horribly unjust to refuse redress because other men in other countries had been guilty recently of crimes which merited and which received the abhorrence of all men. If, therefore, the House found that the case presented was in itself and on its own merits a reasonable one, he appealed to the House to rise superior to any feeling of panic or prejudice, and to do a wise and magnanimous act by releasing these men. On the general question, he desired to say that he put forward this claim for political amnesty on political grounds. He was aware that that was a claim which would not receive much sympathy in various quarters of the House, but it was a claim that they had been making in Ireland—a claim which they had made before in this House, and they felt bound to put it forth again. Apart altogether from the question of political amnesty, there were special circumstances which justified a reconsideration of the sentences in certain cases. When he brought forward Egan's case the late Home Secretary admitted that there was a broad distinction between his case and that of the other prisoners, and a similar admission was made by the present Home Secretary, who after an inquiry, had released Egan. The second case to which he had already drawn particular attention was that of Daly. They founded their claim for the reconsideration of that case upon the fact that the

Chief Constable of Birmingham had publicly stated that the explosives found in Daly's possession were purchased and planted upon him by an agent in the pay of the Irish police, and to that statement Mr. Farndale still firmly stood. An investigation was held by the late Home Secretary into the matter, and the right hon. Gentleman satisfied himself that Mr. Farndale was mistaken, but he did not satisfy Mr. Farndale that he was mistaken, and it was nothing short of a public scandal that Daly should be kept in prison when a police officer had solemnly declared that he had been convicted because of an Irish police plot. He now wished to call attention to a perfectly new case—that of a man named Curtin, or Curtin Kent. This man was a labourer and illiterate, and a man who could not by any possibility have been a principal in the dynamite conspiracy. At the worst he could only have been a dupe in the hands of cleverer men. This man was a native of Fermoy, in Cork, and went to America in 1873. He returned to Ireland in 1883 and went to Fermoy, where he remained for some time with his parents. He then went to Glasgow. These matters, he should say, were not disputed, and would be found set forth in the Report of the trial in Vol. 15 of Harding's *Criminal Cases*. What brought Curtin to Glasgow was this: While in America he had been medically attended by Dr. Gallagher, who had been a doctor in considerable practice in New York. Gallagher gave Curtin a letter to a man named Kilfeather in Glasgow asking him to try to get Curtin some employment in Glasgow, and through this letter Curtin did get work in a shipyard in that city. Curtin remained there for a considerable time; and having heard from Kilfeather that Gallagher was in London, he wrote to him asking him for some money, as he desired to go back to America. Gallagher sent him £5. With that money Curtin came to London. It was proved that the man was actually starving while in London, and he had to pawn a silver watch to buy food. He was arrested along with Gallagher, Whitehead, and Wilson, who were admittedly in the conspiracy, and was placed on trial with them. The charge was a charge of conspiracy, and therefore the evidence against Gallagher and

the others was, according to the Law of Conspiracy, evidence against Curtin. There was no other evidence against Curtin than his connection with Gallagher, and the Lord Chief Justice in his Charge to the jury seemed to suggest that there was a feature in Curtin's case which distinguished it from that of Gallagher and the others, who were undoubted dynamiters. The man, however, was convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for life. There was not a tittle of evidence to show that he was in any way connected with the conspiracy. The only evidence against him was evidence of suspicion, based on letters as to the £5 which had passed between him and Gallagher. The men were tried under extraordinary circumstances of panic. He had been told that as the prison van came down to the Old Bailey with those men every window of every house was crowded with people hissing and groaning; the prison van had to be guarded by an armed force, and even the Court was in the possession of armed men. Under those circumstances, it was only human nature to feel that the jury might have been so prejudiced by the panic as to bring in a verdict which under calmer circumstances they would not have brought in. The same verdict of "Guilty" was brought in against this common hod-man who had been starving in London as that returned in the case of the man found with a large quantity of dynamite, and a large sum of money in his possession. The learned Judge, under these circumstances, and although he had made a declaration as to the difference in Curtin's case, gave the same sentence to Curtin that he gave to the others. This case was a peculiar one. Curtin was a naturalised American subject. The American authorities brought his case under the consideration of the Home Office in 1888, and the result of that apparently was that the English authorities took some steps to investigate the matter. They took the unprecedented course of formulating a number of questions as to Curtin's antecedents, the circumstances of his life, his means of livelihood, his character, and that of his friends and relations in Ireland. They sent these queries round to a number of people in County Cork. To these questions they received replies from a number of persons of all classes

of life, Justices of the Peace and clergymen of all denominations, with a great number of names for reference, but they took no further steps. He mentioned these facts to show that the Government were at one time seriously considering the question of the release of this man or a mitigation of his sentence. A change of Government took place shortly afterwards, and he feared in that way the matter was lost sight of, for from that day to this it had never been reconsidered. He would ask the Home Secretary not to give a hasty answer in the case of Curtin, but at all events to make it his business to investigate it, and to see whether he could not find in it as much element of doubt as was to be found in the case of Egan, who was released. He felt that he should only weaken the force of his appeal if he extended it to any greater length. He would conclude by saying that all these men had now been imprisoned from 10 to 11 years, technically one-half of their term, as a sentence of penal servitude for life generally meant about 20 years. In cases quite as bad, and in even worse cases, which had been tried recently, prisoners received sentences of five, seven, or ten years, and if these Irish prisoners had received the maximum sentence given to English prisoners for worse offences they would to-day be at liberty. He would, therefore, appeal to the House of Commons to consider the question whether these men had not been sufficiently punished by the years they had spent in prison. Their continued imprisonment was undoubtedly looked upon by large masses of people in Ireland as unwise and vindictive. Divided as Nationalists in Ireland might be in general politics there was no division amongst them on this subject, and he did not hesitate to say that he was profoundly convinced that the reconsideration of their case would do more to prevent the recurrence of such crimes as those of which these men were convicted than any mistaken policy of vindictiveness. The release of the prisoners would be hailed with joy. It had been said in many quarters that he and his friends urged the case of these men in a spirit of palliation of the offences for which they were sentenced. That was absolutely untrue. For his part, he agreed with the phrase used in Newcastle by the Chief Secretary, when

he described these crimes as "the detestable resort of political lunacy."

MR. J. MORLEY was understood to say that that was a phrase used not by himself, but by one of his correspondents.

MR. J. REDMOND said, that at any rate the phrase was one with which he agreed, but he thought there were many ways in which the Government could prevent the recurrence of these detestable crimes without continuing these punishments in a way which would appear to Irish Nationalists as vindictive. If in this matter the Government could see their way to meet the wishes of the Irish people, they would do far more to create trust and confidence as to the future in Ireland than by anything else they could possibly do. He begged cordially to support the Motion which had been made, and to respectfully urge the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to deal with the matter in a gracious and lenient spirit.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I trust that the three hon. Gentlemen who have just addressed the House in support of this Motion will not think that I am wanting in courtesy or that I in any way underestimate the gravity of the topic they have brought under our notice if I reply to them in a very few sentences. The truth is, that the whole of the general considerations which affect this question were fully debated in this House only a year ago, and I then expressed at considerable length and in much detail, on my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues, the views then held by Her Majesty's Ministers. Those views we still entertain, and I think I should be wanting in respect to the House if I were to go over again the ground that was thoroughly traversed on that occasion. What has happened since that Debate and Division to require the House to go back on the judgment which it then pronounced? The hon. and learned Member (Mr. J. Redmond) has certainly referred to one undoubtedly new fact, or new series of facts—namely, those deplorable outrages which have taken place in a number of European countries, and which indicate a recrudescence of that very class of crime in the attempted

execution of which these men were fortunately detected and brought to justice. I agree that it would be very unfair to prejudice their cases by matters which have subsequently happened, and I can assure the hon. Members who have spoken that recent events have not in the least degree influenced my judgment as to the individual merits of these cases. But I think the outrages in question have brought home—and it is only from that point of view that I refer to them—to the mind not only of this but of all civilised countries the peculiar atrocity and wickedness of a method of warfare, whether you call it social or political warfare, which shows a reckless disregard for the lives and limbs of innocent persons, and whose peculiar characteristic as distinguished, so far as I know, from every other kind of warfare for political purposes recorded in the history of the world is that it is directed not against those who can be fairly held responsible for the sufferings of victims of oppression, but is directed indiscriminately against all classes of society. I do not think that is a consideration which anyone whose invidious and most painful task it is to have to consider the righteousness of sentences like these can possibly leave out of view. Although the Government are asked to recommend to the Queen that the time has come when we should reconsider the cases of all the prisoners, the hon. and learned Gentleman has only referred, even by name, to three, and has only dealt in anything like detail with one. The case of Egan has already been disposed of; that of Daly was exhaustively discussed last year, and I can only repeat, without re-stating the arguments I then advanced, that in my opinion Daly was most properly convicted. He was engaged without a shadow of doubt in the prosecution of a criminal enterprise, and the evidence was amply sufficient to warrant his conviction and sentence. The only remaining case, is that of Curtin. I am at a disadvantage at the moment in dealing with the arguments in that case, since it is some time since I went into the matter myself. The hon. and learned Gentleman has made a very able defence of Curtin, such as I have no doubt was addressed by his counsel to the three Judges and the jury at the Old Bailey

I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I have myself undertaken a most careful personal investigation of that very case as of those of all the 14 prisoners now undergoing sentence, and I have come to the conclusion that in no one case should the sentence be remitted. I would point out that this House is not the most satisfactory tribunal in which, 11 years after the trial of the event, the friends of the prisoners should attempt to re-open the merits of a case tried by Judge and jury. It is not suggested that the original evidence was false. The details of evidence were carefully sifted at the time, and I am bound to say that it appeared certain that Curtin was deeply implicated in a conspiracy. Although he did not originate it, and was only a subordinate, he was privy to all its proceedings, and was legitimately convicted. The hon. Member said that the American Government have made representations in favour of this prisoner. That statement is true; but the reason for their so doing was because Curtin was an American citizen. I may point out, moreover, that they have taken the same course in other cases—for example, in the case of Dr. Gallagher.

MR. J. REDMOND: Those representations were made on the ground that Dr. Gallagher was insane.

*MR. ASQUITH: Not, I think, the earlier representations, though it is true that representations of that character were made afterwards on behalf of Dr. Gallagher and on behalf of other prisoners. I have always said, and I repeat to-day, that if any of these prisoners could be shown to be physically or mentally unfit to undergo their sentences their case would receive the most careful reconsideration. I had Gallagher examined by the doctors of the prison, and they reported that he was perfectly sound in mind. Gentlemen in America were not satisfied with that Report, and suggested that some expert should be called in. That is not the usual practice. Still, in this case, as that prisoner was an American citizen, I agreed, and the prisoner was examined by one of our most eminent specialists in mental disease. The result is that there is no doubt whatever

that the man is perfectly sane. I have, I think, said enough to dispose of this Amendment for the purposes of to-night. It is a very invidious thing to reject an appeal for mercy. It is an unthankful task for any Minister to have to discharge, but I repeat to-night what I said before, because it represents my settled conviction and practice, that, so far as these prisoners are concerned, they have been, and they will be, treated precisely in the same way as other prisoners in Her Majesty's gaols. I do not reckon that there is anything in the nature of their crime, or the circumstances under which they were convicted, which would warrant a departure from the ordinary practice. If they could be shown to have been improperly convicted, in their case, as in that of other prisoners, I should be prepared to give the fullest hearing to their case. If, again, they could be shown to be in peril of life or health, the fullest consideration would be given to their condition. Beyond those lines, and outside those limits, I am not prepared to go, and when this Amendment asks the House to represent to Her Majesty that the cases of these men should be reconsidered with a view to their release, any Minister would be acting with a gross disregard to the responsibility that the law casts upon him in assenting to such a proposition. It is no argument to say that such a course might please some one; and, painful as the duty is, I cannot hold out any hope that, if the House were to accept the advice of the hon. Gentleman and were to express the opinion that these cases were worthy of special treatment, such a course would receive the support or influence the action of Her Majesty's Government. I trust that the House will rest content with the consideration given to this question to-night and the full discussion it received on a previous occasion.

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said, the House would agree that the manner of the right hon. Gentleman in refusing to consider the case of these men to-night was different to what it was on the occasion of his first appearance in his present position. But he (Mr. Harrington) regretted to say

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that, though the manner was more satisfactory, the language of the refusal was equally as emphatic. It was a remarkable thing that the right hon. Gentleman was careful both on the last occasion and to-night to give a complete go-by to the comparison hon. Members had instituted, or rather the contrast they had drawn between the sentences on the Walsall prisoners and that inflicted on the Irish prisoners. If in Ireland there was a burning feeling of indignation at life sentences being inflicted in the case of the Irish prisoners, and five, seven, and ten years' imprisonment in the case of the Walsall prisoners, the Government could not wonder. Under the circumstances, they could not complain if the Irish people were indignant, and if this question was eternally knocking at their door. With regard to these being political prisoners, the Government of the day chose to try the men under the Treason Felony Act; and, if a political complexion was thrown round the whole of their case, the responsibility for that rested, not on Irishmen, but on the Government who put the men on their trial. The Home Secretary asked the Irish Members to bring forward new facts. Surely he was trifling with the intelligence of the House. New facts as to what?—as to trials that took place 11 years ago. Whenever fresh circumstances were brought forward the answer of the right hon. Gentleman was the same stereotyped answer—namely, that all these things were before the Judge and were present to the minds of the jury. The right hon. Gentleman said he had quite satisfied himself that the conviction in Daly's case was just. It had never been contended that Daly had not some knowledge of the nature of the bombs found upon him. The whole case put forward on his behalf was that those things were planted upon him by agents of the Government, and he was sorry to say that the same agents had continued to act under the *régime* of the right hon. Gentleman who now sits on the Treasury Bench. There was not a shadow of a doubt that dynamite outrages now occurring in Ireland were, more or less,

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owing to the money expended by the right hon. Gentleman. It was known in Ireland perfectly well that Daly had been led into crime by the American agents of the Home Office, like so many others of his deluded and unfortunate countrymen. The allegation made was that these bombs were planted upon Daly by Government agents, and that the unfortunate man was the victim of a foul conspiracy, and the police had perfect knowledge of the fact. If there was the slightest ground for the allegation the House ought to insist upon the whole matter being thoroughly investigated, in order to ascertain how far the Government officials were guilty; but, as matters now stood, those officials were being rewarded, whilst their victims were undergoing life-long sentences of imprisonment. The right hon. Gentleman had dismissed that evening the question of the imprisonment of these men, who were pining out their lives in penal servitude who, guilty as some of them might have been of some connection with dynamite outrages, would not have been so heavily punished had they not had the misfortune to be Irishmen, but would to-day have undergone their imprisonment, and would have been released. He could only tell the Government that the Irish Representatives were faithful to their people, and that they would, if driven to do so, make it very inconvenient to Her Majesty's present Government, or to any future Government which might exist in this country. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had been careful to hold out no hope that the cases of these men would be reconsidered, but he was not certain that the *non possumus* of the right hon. Gentleman would not undergo a great change in the future. There was no sympathy among Irishmen with the kind of crime alleged against these men, but the feeling was that they had received a punishment which they would not have received if they had been of any other nationality than Irish. As long as the right hon. Gentleman refused to consider these cases, that one feeling would induce the Irish people to make the right hon. Gentleman's position as uncomfortable as they could make it. No doubt the threat would be regarded lightly now on

the Treasury Bench, but he looked forward to the time when it would be looked upon as more significant. They had seen many changes in recent days, and might therefore hope for the time when appeals for justice on behalf of these men would be received in a more conciliatory spirit.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) said, that last Session when the question was raised he had voted with the Government, because he thought the Home Secretary's case was conclusive against any immediate release of the men whose position had been so ably and so pathetically described by the Irish Members who had spoken. But on the present occasion he felt that under certain circumstances it might be desirable to grant a general amnesty. Now, he had received a letter from one of the most able advocates of the cause of these prisoners, which called his attention to the case of William Clark—a young man who was convicted 11 years ago for connection with a dynamite conspiracy, and now in Portland. Clark was the son of a man who served in the Crimea. He was to have gone into the Army himself, but he was rejected by the doctors on the ground that one of his lungs was affected. He then earned his livelihood as a school teacher at Dungannon until he was thrown out of employment, when he emigrated to America. There he was drawn into the net of the dynamite conspirators, with the result that he was convicted and sentenced. He endorsed all that had been said by Irish Members about agents of the British Government enticing young men into crime. He knew it had been the case in Ireland, and could well believe it was done in America. It was quite possible, therefore, that this unfortunate young man was the victim of that diabolical conspiracy. But while in other cases serious injuries had been caused by the men concerned, this young man had not even brought about an explosion. He was at present in ill-health, and it was believed that he was in consumption. These facts constituted a very strong case, and if the right hon. Gentleman found that it came

within the limits of the rule he had just laid down he should show the people of the country that in the administration of his Office he was anxious to do all he could to extend the clemency of the Crown.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) reminded the House that some time ago he called the attention of the Home Secretary to the case of a prisoner named Callaghan, whose health had suffered in prison owing to an accident consequent upon the kind of job-surgery to which people were subjected in gaols. A doctor, in examining the man for some disease of the ear, incautiously using a glass syringe, the instrument broke in the ear, the eventual result being that one of the eyes was sympathetically affected, became diseased, and had to be taken out. This was a very hard case, even admitting that the misfortune had been due to an accident, for imprisonment did not include a sentence of semi-blinding; and he suggested to the Home Secretary whether the facts did not point in the direction of some special mitigation of Callaghan's punishment. Referring next to the policy just declared by the right hon. Gentleman, he acknowledged that the public mind at the present time was undoubtedly in an acutely sensitive state with reference to anarchist explosions abroad as well as at home. But these dynamiters were convicted in 1883, and the Government must feel that there was an absolute distinction in principle between the case of these prisoners and the case of the anarchists. The Walsall trial showed that there was no connection with any political conspiracy in Ireland where there was not the slightest anarchical tendency. It would do much to break up and prevent the spreading of conspiracy in Ireland if something were done to show that a broad line of distinction was recognised between the two cases. In the Walsall Anarchist case a remarkable piece of evidence was given: to the effect that one of the prisoners admitted he was making bombs for the purposes of explosion in some opera-house abroad. The sentences passed in

that case ranged from 5 to 10 years' penal servitude ; but what was done in the case of the Irishmen ? At that time—it was a remarkable period, immediately after the passing of the Crimes Act, under which a number of innocent men were hanged, as he would never hesitate to declare—men in America, roused by those judicial murders, and believing there was no other way of affecting the mind of the English public, undoubtedly entered upon a rash and criminal course. But to compare their case with that of the French and Spanish Anarchists, whose acts were as meaningless as murderous, was to mistake entirely the nature of the cases. He verily believed these outrages had been committed because of the continued incarceration of these men. His own desire would have been in 1886, when the Home Rule Bill was introduced, that representations should have been made to Her Majesty's Government for the release of all prisoners in gaol. But though nothing was done for several years that did not relieve Her Majesty's Government from the responsibility of acting upon the broad and deep line of demarcation in these cases. These crimes were all of an abominable nature, but when the Anarchist bomb-makers only suffered five and 10 years' imprisonment, these unfortunate Irishmen were not being fairly dealt with in being kept under sentence of penal servitude for life. He maintained that these Irish prisoners had been more than adequately punished. Greatly to his credit the Irish Secretary had shown mercy, and Ireland had become more tranquil on account of it. Terrible murders, it was said, would follow the release of the Donegal prisoners, but had not the very contrary been the case ? Did the right hon. Gentleman believe that if these prisoners were released they would have any successors in using dynamite ? Was it not clear to his mind that these crimes arose out of the political desperation of the time ; and that political desperation having passed away, was it likely that anyone in circumstances different from those which he trusted would never arise again, they would never recur ? The right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, had denounced what he called "the Maamtrasna alliance"—that was his expression. The Tories well knew

when they were in Office, supported by an Irish vote, that the Liberals would make no difficulty whatever about showing clemency. In the last two or three years there had been some unimportant outrages committed in Ireland, and the cause of them, in his opinion, was the continued incarceration of the prisoners whose imprisonment they were considering. He had already said that these men had been more than adequately punished. The Home Secretary asked what had passed since their case was last brought before the House. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman—12 long months had passed, another year added to the long years which they had already spent in gaol. He would not stand there pleading these men's cases if he believed that in doing so he would be encouraging in the smallest degree these terrible dynamite outrages. He knew the difficulty of the task of the Home Secretary. He knew that, surrounded as he was in London by refugees from various parts of the Continent—men with no political aim—he was very anxious that nothing should be done to encourage the idea amongst those men that tenderness was to be shown in connection with outrage against society. So far as the person who committed the outrage in Paris, or the man who attempted the outrage in Trafalgar Square, was concerned, for his part, he would hang them by the neck. In the case of the Irish business, the outrages were the outcome of a feeling of hopelessness and despair which prevailed at the time amongst millions of Irishmen of getting justice from the millions of Englishmen who had now taken the side of Ireland. He trusted that the Home Secretary would look at this whole matter rather more from the standpoint of humanity than from the point of view of the stern official. The Member for the Harbour Division had said that he would bring forward this Motion again, whether it embarrassed the Government or not. He (Mr. Healy) did not see how it embarrassed the Government. So far as his judgment went, knowing the facts of the year 1883, knowing that these men were the resultant of the desperation of that time, he had only to say that, so far as his voice went, it would be always heard in

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favour of mercy and clemency for these men.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 96 ; Noes 286.—(Division List, No. 3.)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

*MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) moved—

“Humbly to represent to Your Majesty that the administration of the law in Ireland in the course of the last few months, by the encouragement offered to the eviction of tenants, and the destruction and burning of their houses, by the prosecution of Representatives of the people and others, for efforts to secure shelter for the evicted people, by the continuance of the practice of jury-packing, and by the suppression of public meetings, has caused grave disappointment in Ireland, and tends directly to produce that contempt for and hostility to the Law and its administration which accompanied in so marked a degree the administration of Irish affairs by Your Majesty's late Government.”

The hon. Member said, he wished in moving his Amendment to refer, first, to the encouragement offered by the Government in Ireland to the eviction of tenants and the burning of their homes ; second, to the recent prosecutions in Roscommon ; third, to the practice of jury-packing ; and fourth, to the suppression of public meeting. The estate of Lord de Freyne in Roscommon was one, the land of which was of the poorest character. It was a wretched, swampy soil, flooded with water. The holdings were small also, averaging four or five acres, and no more congested district than this could be found in Ireland. The tenants had never been able to earn the rent from the soil. Evictions had not been frequent in recent years because of the Plan of Campaign, but when the combination of the people broke up the evictions were recommenced. These evictions had been of such a character as to constitute a gross provocation to crime, and had been attended by such barbarous and inhuman conduct that he said the Government ought to refuse to aid in carrying them out. The people singled out for eviction were mostly old people who had all their lives been paying excessive rents—not earned

out of soil—but earned in labour in England, and who were now flung out to die because they had broken down and were no longer able to go to England to earn money for Lord De Freyne. In most of these cases the agent was offered one, one and a half, and in some cases two years' rent, and this was refused. Nothing would be accepted save the full pound of flesh. In every instance the eviction was followed by the destruction, the levelling of the houses, and in one case the house was burned by the agent, and a child 14 months old was in it at the time and was almost burned to death. This practice of destroying and burning the houses of the people had at all times been denounced by just and humane men. Even that House in its old unregenerate days, before such a thing as tenant right was recognised or admitted, attempted by legislation to put down the practice. Indeed, it seemed incredible that at this period of the 19th century in a civilised country such a practice should be possible. They all remembered the outcry raised about the burnings at Glenbeigh. England rang with denunciation of them, but not a word was heard on English Liberal platforms of the De Freyne evictions. He asserted that the action of the Government was precisely the same in the De Freyne case as under the *régime* of the late Chief Secretary. His complaint was, that the aid of the police was given at these evictions at all. He admitted the necessity of protecting the Sheriff, but in the cases to which he referred the Sheriff was not present at all ; and in any case there was no need of protection. The presence of the police might have been refused at these evictions upon two grounds—in the first instance, because there was no danger to the public peace ; and, in the next, because the Government knew that the agent was going to destroy the tenants' houses. If it was said that a trespass had been committed on Lord De Freyne's estate, why was not Lord De Freyne left to his civil remedy ? For the benefit of this house-burner the Executive invoked the Criminal Law, and prosecuted men but for whose alleged crime these wretched people would probably have by this time perished in the ditch sides. Not content with this, the Government had hundreds

of police, horse and foot, rifle and baton-men, day and night, at enormous cost, doing what?—guarding the ruins, lest any man should commit a trespass on Lord De Freyne. His next charge against the Government was that they had prosecuted men whose only crime was that they had built houses to shelter the poor, homeless people. He was surprised that the Government, after the repeated declarations made by Liberals and by members of the present Government during the six years of the Unionist *régime*, should have sanctioned such prosecutions. Members had expected that the right hon. Gentleman would have followed the action of Drummond in 1835, when the aid of the police was refused to the tithe-proctors, and he (Mr. Clancy) deeply regretted that he had not seen his way to do so. He had to complain, in the third place, that the infamous practice of jury-packing had been revived under the auspices of the right hon. Gentleman. Mr. Gladstone, in December, 1890, at Manchester, referred to jury-packing in these terms—

“What course was taken in regard to the trials at Maryborough? The Roman Catholic jurors were all, I believe, ordered to stand by, and, with the exception of one single Roman Catholic, Protestant jurors were found to try Roman Catholic prisoners.”

The Chief Secretary himself, referring at Glasgow in 1890 to the same case of jury-packing, said—

“Now, gentlemen, I am not saying a word as to the result of that trial; that is another business; but I say that if you can find a better name for that transaction than jury-packing, I will consider it, but if you do not find me a better name than that, I do ask you to say here, with full responsibility for every word I say, that the transaction was jury-packing in its most odious and obnoxious form.”

Well, what had the right hon. Gentleman himself done at the recent Assizes in Cork? One of the prisoners had had his venue changed by the right hon. Gentleman from Clare to Cork. When the trial came on there were 72 jurors upon the panel, and 41 Catholic jurors were ordered to stand aside. The only difference he (Mr. Clancy) saw between that transaction and the transaction at Maryborough was that, whilst 42 Catholics

were ordered to stand aside at Maryborough, only 41 were ordered to stand aside at Cork. If the right hon. Gentleman could find him a better name for that transaction than jury-packing he would consider it. If the right hon. Gentleman could not find him a better name he would say, as the right hon. Gentleman had said at Glasgow about the Maryborough case, that it was jury-packing in its most odious and obnoxious form. It might be said that all this was necessary. In his (Mr. Clancy's) opinion it was not necessary, and the right hon. Gentleman might safely trust to the jurors of Cork, or of any county in Ireland, the duty of convicting prisoners whose guilt was clearly proved. He went further, and said that even if the right hon. Gentleman were convinced that criminals could not be convicted it would be far better in the interests of peace and order to let criminals escape than to resort, in order to convict them, to practices which directly led people to commit crime in their turn, which produced contempt for the law and hostility to its administrators, and which had notoriously created in Ireland that want of sympathy between the law and those who were subject to it, which was the real cause of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. By resorting to such a practice as jury-packing, the Chief Secretary was doing the very reverse of that which he sought to do by introducing the Home Rule Bill; he was inspiring the people of Ireland with detestation of the law and distrust of its administrators. He (Mr. Clancy) did not, of course, expect that the Amendment would be carried; but he hoped that its introduction and the discussion upon it would induce the right hon. Gentleman, on any future occasion on which he might be tempted by the evil genius of Dublin Castle to indulge in the practices to which he had alluded, to pause before yielding to the temptation.

Mr. HARRINGTON seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words—

“Humbly to represent to Your Majesty that the administration of the Law in Ireland in the course of the last few months, by the encouragement offered to the eviction of tenants and the

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destruction and burning of their houses, by the prosecution of Representatives of the people and others for efforts to secure shelter for the evicted people, by the continuance of the practice of jury-packing, and by the suppression of public meetings, has caused grave disappointment in Ireland and tends directly to produce that contempt for and hostility to the Law and its administration which accompanied in so marked a degree the administration of Irish affairs by Your Majesty's late Government."—*(Mr. Clancy.)*

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not propose to deal with the details which the hon. Gentleman has brought before the House, nor, indeed, with the question at all. His speech strikes familiarly on my ear, long accustomed to similar utterances, and I am glad to think that I can leave the responsibility of replying to it to a gentleman who has, no doubt, often listened with equal satisfaction to similar attacks when he sat on the seat I now occupy. I now watch him struggling in stormy seas which I have often traversed. The right hon. Gentleman has my fullest sympathy, though I do not suppose he will desire my active support. I should not have intervened at all but that I think it would be expedient to know what course the Government mean to pursue with regard to this Address. Those who were here about 8 o'clock will recollect the incident that occurred. It is the first time, I think, in the memory of most of us that an Amendment to the Address has been carried in the face of a Government which is supposed to have a majority in the House, and I think we ought to have, before the evening closes, and even before the Debate is continued, some declaration from the Government. I do not mean to make any speech on the subject—

MR. T. M. HEALY: I rise to Order. I wish to know whether it is competent for the right hon. Gentleman, on an Amendment affecting the administration of the law in Ireland, to discuss an Amendment about the House of Lords?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the right hon. Gentleman is in Order.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not mean to discuss any question connected with the House of Lords or any other question. I merely wish to put this plain interrogatory to the Government. After what has passed, do they mean to treat the Resolution arrived at by the House of Commons with contempt, to reverse it or to resign? I have given my best reflection to the possible alternatives which are before them, and I can think of no more than these three unless it be to advise Her Majesty to dissolve. These four alternatives appear to exhaust the whole possibilities of the situation. I think it would be convenient for the House and for the conduct of business that we should know which of these four conceivable alternatives they have determined to take.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The ingenuity of the right hon. Gentleman has discovered four alternatives. There is a fifth, which does not seem to have presented itself to his mind, and that is that the Government intend to proceed with the business of the House as it is now before it.

MR. J. MORLEY: The business before the House is an Amendment on the administration of the law in Ireland in respect of which my hon. Friend the Member for Dublin County (Mr. Clancy) has brought an indictment against Her Majesty's Government, and more especially against myself, who am responsible for that administration. He very rightly said in his opening remarks that he was sure I should not feel personally responsible for all the acts of my subordinates. That is perfectly right, but at the same time there is not a single indictment to which he has referred for which I do not desire to undertake some responsibility. I did not personally and individually direct every act, but I did personally direct many of them, and I am personally responsible for them all. My hon. Friend charged me with practising jury-packing at Cork Assizes, in contradiction to well-known

declarations of my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and myself in connection with the Maryborough trials. He reminded the House in connection with these trials that we had protested and said that what had taken place deserved the name of jury-packing. He said truly that as a result of 42 jurors being directed to stand by, the prisoners who came from Northern Donegal were in the first case tried by a jury upon which there was not one single Catholic. In the second case there was one Catholic on the jury and the remaining 11 were Protestants. Now is that like what has happened in Cork? Nothing of the kind. It is quite true that in the case of the prisoner from Clare there were 41 Catholics directed by the Crown to stand by whilst 19 Protestants were challenged by the prisoner. But look at the result and compare it with the result in the Maryborough case. In the Cork case, there were on the jury that convicted six Catholics and six Protestants. Surely my hon. Friend will see that the practice adopted was not analogous to that at the Maryborough trials, when the result was that half the jury belonged to the Catholic and half to the Protestant faith. The other case to which my hon. Friend referred was, I think, that of the "Queen against Corrigan and Brennan"—a Whiteboy case. In that case, 27 Catholics were directed to stand by whilst six Protestants were challenged by the prisoner. In the result there you did not have an exclusively Protestant jury, because while there were eight Protestants there were four Catholics upon it. I say at once that on every jury that was empanelled at the Cork Assizes there were several members of the Roman Catholic faith. When my hon. and learned Friend brings a charge of jury-packing against the Crown officials at Cork, and says the transaction there was as bad as that at Maryborough, I think he does not accurately inform the House of what took place. Then he says we changed the venue. We did not change the venue. The venue was changed because these cases went naturally by the ordinary process, which we had no right to interfere with, for trial at Cork. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Oppo-

sition (Mr. A. J. Balfour) called it last night a natural change of venue, and that certainly is not a change of venue which can be made a matter of accusation against us. If it were worth while, I could point out that the organ of the group of gentlemen on the Bench from which my hon. and learned Friend spoke has changed its ground on this subject. It first of all charged the Crown officials with jury-packing on the ground of religious faith, and then on the 21st of December last there was a leader in which it was stated that it was not for their religion but for their politics that the Crown Prosecutor ordered these jurors to stand aside. As a matter of fact, there were on all the juries members of both the great Religious Communions in Ireland and of all three political Parties. My hon. and learned Friend dwelt at a length of which I do not complain on the action of the Executive Government with respect to certain proceedings which were not exactly evictions, but were proceedings of a similar kind to evictions, on the De Freyne estate. He seemed to think that, because I had always said that we ought to endeavour to govern Ireland without exceptional legislation, we undertook to govern Ireland without any law at all. I never took up that position; on the contrary, from the very first I have always said that exactly because we had undertaken—as some thought, too audaciously—to govern Ireland without exceptional criminal laws we must be extremely careful that the ordinary law was faithfully and even rigorously administered. There is no accusation against us on that point. The question is, whether in connection with those De Freyne proceedings the Executive Government have gone one jot or tittle outside the limits to which they were bound to go by law. My hon. Friend forgets that when in the course of my administration I endeavoured to assert what I considered, as I consider still, to be a humane and proper principle—namely, that eviction should not be granted in respect of night seizures, the Court of Queen's Bench made a series of observations which implied that not only the County Inspector, but I myself might have been, and perhaps ought to have been, privily attached. My hon. and learned Friend forgets that I have done

my utmost to narrow police action in proceedings of this kind, so as to bring it within limits prescribed by humanity, and by considerations of public policy. He seems also to forget that neither I nor he himself, if he were in my place, could neglect to carry out the decrees of the Courts. He says that they were not decrees of Superior Courts in respect of which we gave police protection, but that they were merely Magistrates' warrants. My hon. and learned Friend has misjudged the nature of the circumstances under which the police are there. He drew a picture of the circumstances on the De Freyne Estate, and the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), in communications to the newspapers at the time, mentioned a number of circumstances largely corroborating my hon. Friend's statements about the position of the tenants. There are circumstances connected with the proceedings against those tenants which everybody, in whatever part of the House he sits, must condemn. I am not here to attack Mr. Blake, but I say there are circumstances connected with those proceedings which I do not think any gentleman opposite would attempt to defend. That, however, was not the question which the Executive Government had to decide. The question was a plain and practical question. Some of the cases referred to were, no doubt, hard cases, and, as far as I know, my hon. Friend was perfectly correct in his statement respecting them. But when he says that the police were present during the demolishing of houses, and during the burning of one of the houses, I have the evidence of the police to set against his authority. Who his authority is I know not; but this I confidently affirm: that the District Inspector, a gentleman with whom I have had dealings for nearly the whole time of my Irish administration—and in whom I have the greatest confidence as a man of great prudence, great tact, and, I think, entire veracity—assures me that in no case were the police present when the houses were demolished, nor when the agents obtained re-possession of the houses which had been forcibly re-occupied by the tenants. My hon. Friend challenged me to deny his assertion. I do deny it, and I give my authority. He has not given

me the authority on which he makes his assertion. Now as to the real justification for police interference in these cases. It is quite true that the orders of the Executive were orders with respect to which I was specially consulted, and the police went to put a stop to the proceedings. My hon. Friend unintentionally misled the House when he said that the police were here used to vindicate the rights of the landlord, for which he had a civil remedy. That is not the case; those are not the grounds on which the police were ordered to interfere in these proceedings. What were the grounds? You have here a large band of men, acting in pursuance of violent speeches with menaces which had been made the day before, going on to these lands with a demonstration or force in numbers large enough to overawe all resistance on the part of the landlord in insisting on his legal rights, and any Executive Government, either in Ireland or anywhere else, are bound to see that the police are sent, in order to preserve the public peace. They have no alternative. I quite agree with my hon. Friend that the action of the agent is by no means free from grave doubt. I believe that both sides of the House would there agree. What did happen was this: Certain of these tenants who had been evicted in February, 1892, remained in unlawful possession, but their possession, although unlawful, was undisturbed; and I quite admit that that gives a colour to the supposition that the landlord or his agent ought to have got some further decree to turn them out upon some fresh proceedings. I think action of the sort was harsh and imprudent, and I should say it approached to the bounds of illegality; but that does not affect the charge brought by the hon. Member—it does not affect the duty of the Executive Government, which is to prevent a breach of the peace. I really do not think that if the hon. Member had reflected he would have felt that there was any real force in the charge brought forward. The Executive Government have in this matter only done what the law compelled them to do. The Leader of the Opposition asked me last night why certain persons, including two Members of Parliament, had not been tried at the Winter Assizes instead of the Spring

Assizes. The right hon. Gentleman drew a satirical picture concerning our action ; but the truth is, that there was no ground whatever for his satire. The case was this : These men were bail prisoners—they were not custody prisoners, and the Judge who went to try the prisoners at these Assizes had sent word to the agent of the Crown in another county that he did not intend to try bail prisoners, and so load the list, as it was not the intention of the Winter Assizes Act that bail prisoners should be tried at those Assizes. That is the reason why these gentlemen were not put upon their trial during the Winter Assizes. Therefore, there was no attempt on our part to evade their being brought before the best tribunal that the institutions of the country provide; and if there has been a miscarriage of justice, I do not apprehend that a particular miscarriage affords any justification whatever for charging us with slackness in vindicating the law when we see a deliberate attempt to break it.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Sir, I intend to move the adjournment of this Debate, and I do so on two grounds : In the first place, we are engaged in what is certainly an important discussion—a very important discussion in regard to the administration of the Irish Government—at a very late hour. I know there are several hon. Members who are fully entitled to speak upon the subject, and I think it would be for their convenience, and for the general convenience of the House, that they should have a better opportunity than can be given them after 1 o'clock in the morning. I would make an appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I recollect that when he proposed that the Twelve o'Clock Rule should be suspended he said he did so only if the House was so disposed, that we might finish the Address to-night ; and although that does not bind the right hon. Gentleman, it does indicate on the part of the Government a desire to consult not merely the wishes of their own Party, but the wishes of the whole House. That, then, is the first

reason. The second reason is, perhaps, of still greater importance. We are discussing an Amendment to the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne. It does appear to me that the decision upon that Amendment, and the further discussion upon that Amendment, depends very materially upon what it is intended to do with the Address itself. The Leader of the Opposition has asked for information upon the subject. The Chancellor of the Exchequer postponed his reply, and I certainly do not think it would be fair to ask the Leader of the House to give an absolute answer to-night if the Government have not consulted upon the subject, and are not prepared to do so ; but I would point out that it is both inconvenient to the Government and the House that we should be discussing matters in the dark. Is it probable that this Address upon which an Amendment is hung will be proceeded with ? To that Address, which in itself is a merely formal document, has been added a most important Amendment, one which has been described by the Leader of the House as an Amendment which calls upon Her Majesty to do what it was not within Her Constitutional powers to do, and an Amendment, therefore, which no true Liberal could support. Without asking the Government to pledge itself, there can be no doubt, I imagine, in the mind of any Member of this House that a Government which has so described the Amendment cannot by any possibility accept it, and be the channel through which this ridiculous Amendment can be submitted to Her Majesty. In these circumstances, it is clear we are wasting the time of the House. We might go on now for hours ; we might carry an additional Amendment ; but we shall only hang it upon an Address, which is condemned beforehand, an Address which has been amended, and which can only be presented against the will of the Government, who are supposed to represent the majority of the House. It is perfectly clear that some step must be taken—I do not say what—in order to extricate the Government from the position in which they are placed ; and I think, therefore, it is in their interests, quite as much as in the interests of the House generally, that I make this Motion.

Mr. J. Morley

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."
—(*Mr. J. Chamberlain.*)

SIR W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman has given two reasons for his Motion. The first, which would have been quite sufficient, had reference to the time at which the discussion is proceeding. The right hon. Gentleman had another excellent reason. He desires to extricate the Government, and, under these circumstances, I shall not oppose his Motion.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am glad the Government have seen fit to assent to a Motion which, had it been in my power and consistent with the Orders of the House, I should have ventured to move at an earlier period. I do not rise to debate the question, but merely to ask the Government whether they will be in a position to make a statement at 12 o'clock to-morrow, before they resume the discussion? Unless by to-morrow at 12 o'clock the Government have made up their minds what they mean to do, of course it will be necessary for us to ask again by some Motion of Adjournment what course they mean to adopt. I hope they will save us that trouble, and consequent waste of time, by coming down with a policy to the House which will save us, at all events, from any further unnecessary discussion upon an Address which certainly in its present shape it is quite impossible for us finally to send up to Her Majesty. I hope the Government will consider this matter, and I am glad they have assented to the Motion.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, an Amendment of an excellent and valuable character had been adopted by the House, and he merely rose now to express the hope and belief that the House would not allow themselves to be bullied into making any change in what had been voted by the House at the demand of the Leader of the Tory Party and the Leader of the Liberal Unionists.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he understood the Member for West Birmingham to make his Motion upon the grounds of

the lateness of the hour. His request had been acceded to by the Government; but no sooner had he been disappointed in having that Motion accepted, than the Leader of the Opposition got up and asked the Government for further explanations. [*Cries of "Agreed!"*]

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Perhaps it may shorten the discussion and relieve the hon. Gentleman of some anxiety if I inform him that he mistook the purport of my observations. I said I hoped that to-morrow—[*Cries of "To-day!"*—]the Government would make a statement as to their intentions.

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL

ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Liversedge and Mirfield and the Stroud Joint Hospital Districts, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 1.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL

ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Accrington, Ashton-under-Lyne, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bolton, Hexham, Knarborough-and-Tentergate, Llandilo, Merthyr Tydfil, Penrith, Southport, Wallasey, Widnes, and Workington, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 2.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER

(HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board under "The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890," relating to the urban sanitary district of Portsmouth, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 3.]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Ordered, That the Committee of Public Accounts do consist of Fifteen Members:—Mr. Bartley, Mr. Buchanan, Sir J. Gorst, Mr. Hanbury, Sir A. Hayter, Sir J. T. Hibbert, Mr. Jackson, Mr. A. C. Morton, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. A. O'Connor, Mr. P. Stanhope, Sir R. Temple,

Mr. A. Williams, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Wodehouse.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

CROWN LANDS BILL.

On Motion of Sir J. T. Hibbert, Bill to amend the Law relating to the management of the Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues of the Crown, ordered to be brought in by Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 4.]

LIGHTHOUSES, &c. (LOCAL INSPECTIONS).

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 15.]

PIERS AND HARBOURS PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 16.]

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 17.]

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 18.]

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 19.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1894-5 (MEMORANDUM ON ESTIMATES).

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 20.]

TREASURY CHEST FUND.

Paper [presented 12th March] to be printed. [No. 21.]

EAST INDIA (OPIUM COMMISSION).

Copy presented,—of First Report of the Royal Commission on Opium, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (PENSIONS).

Return presented, —relative thereto [Address 14th September, 1893; Mr. Alpheus Morton]; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (LIFE SAVING APPLIANCES).

Copy presented,—of Rules made by the Board of Trade under "The Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Act, 1888," to come into effect on 1st June, 1894 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE No. 45).

Copy presented,—of Regulations for Degrees in Medicine, Ordinance No. 45, St. Andrews, No. 4 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE No. 46).

Copy presented,—of Regulations as to application of Parliamentary Grants, as to Salaries, and for the institution of a Fee Fund, and for other purposes, Ordinance No. 46, St. Andrews, No. 5 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE No. 47).

Copy presented,—of Professorships in the Faculty of Medicine in the University of St. Andrews, Ordinance No. 47, St. Andrews, No. 6 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE No. 48).

Copy presented,—of Composition of the Faculties and Institution of Faculties of Science, Ordinance No. 48, St. Andrews, No. 7 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 14th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

THE AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The Leader of the Opposition, in the course of last night, asked me what course Her Majesty's Government were prepared to take in reference to the Address to the Crown in its present shape. The House, I think, on both sides will understand that that was a question which I could not, and ought not, to have answered without due deliberation. I consider that the demand was a reasonable demand, and I propose now to state to the House what is the decision of the Government and the course which they intend to pursue. I will state what I am sure is familiar to the House, that the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne is a proceeding for which Her Majesty's Government make themselves responsible—responsible as the representatives of the majority of the House of Commons from whom that Address proceeds. I think that is a clear Constitutional principle which nobody will be disposed to dispute. The Government cannot present to the Sovereign in a formal manner a document of which they are not prepared to accept the entire and immediate responsibility. The present state of the Address in answer to the Speech is this—that an addition has been incorporated into it by the Amendment moved last night by the hon. Member for Northampton. When that Amendment was moved I stated the reasons why Her Majesty's Government felt themselves bound to oppose it. The avowed object of that Amendment was to raise in a definite form the action to

be taken by the House of Commons in its resistance to the proceedings of the House of Lords. I then stated that Her Majesty's Government accepted fully in all its sense the declaration which was made upon that subject by the late Prime Minister in this House. I said that we meant to oppose the doctrine, as set forth in this House by the Leader of the Opposition, that the House of Commons was to be subject to the control of the House of Lords. But I referred also to the language used by the late Prime Minister as to the supreme importance, the gravity, and the greatness of that question, and the deliberation with which it ought to be approached by a responsible Government, and, I will say, by a responsible House of Commons. I claimed that, as far at least as Her Majesty's Government was concerned, they should be entrusted, at any rate by their supporters, with absolute freedom of action and discretion in such a matter. I stated that the Amendment moved was not in a form or couched in language which we were prepared to present to the Sovereign. The Amendment, as was pointed out, consisted of two paragraphs. The first paragraph prayed the Queen—

"That the power now enjoyed by persons not elected to Parliament by the possessors of the Parliamentary franchise to prevent Bills being submitted to Your Majesty for Your Royal approval shall cease."

There was no statement in that paragraph as to what was the course to be pursued. The hon. Member for Northampton said, in effect—"You may take it as you please; it may either mean the abolition of the House of Lords or, if you like it better, it may mean the limitation of the veto." But the responsible Ministers of the Crown, if they tender advice to the Sovereign on such a question, must tender no ambiguous advice. They must have made up their own minds; they cannot take this light and airy view of such a question. It is a question of the most supreme gravity and involves the greatest responsibility, and, as far as the advisers of the Crown are concerned, they must form their own opinion, and they must tender clear and definite advice to the Crown. So much for the first paragraph of this Amendment. Then comes the second paragraph, which is—

"We respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary"

—well, I imagine that when a responsible

Government advise the Crown on a question of this kind they must do it not in a hypothetical manner; they must have determined whether a necessity, ay, and an extreme necessity, has arisen before they tender advice on such a subject as that. The second paragraph is—

"We respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary, Your Majesty will, with and by the advice of Your responsible Ministers, use the power vested in Your Majesty to secure the passing of this much-needed reform."

The hon. Member for Northampton stated what his view, at all events, was of the Motion which he made. He said it meant the creation of 500 Peers.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): That was only one suggestion.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: At all events, these suggestions are not such as can be taken up in a moment. The House of Commons and the responsible Government must know what it means when it addresses the Sovereign in answer to the Speech from the Throne. I am not prepared to say that the creation of a great number of Peers is the proper method of dealing with a question of this kind. The creation of Peers for the purpose of influencing immediately the action of the House of Lords has never taken place in this country since the days of the great Tory Administration in the reign of Queen Anne, when 12 Peers were created in a single day for the purpose of overthrowing the Duke of Marlborough. It is quite true that the Government of Lord Grey in 1831 advised the Crown and obtained power for the creation of Peers, but this authority was never put into execution. I will not discuss that question now. We are asked by the hon. Member for Northampton to determine now to create 500 Peers. Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to come to any such decision. I beg leave to point out the position in which we are placed. The question is one which a responsible Government cannot afford to treat with levity. It is not in that spirit that so great a Constitutional issue can be presented either by a responsible Government or a responsible House of Commons either to the House of Lords or to the Crown. If this matter is to be approached, and in my opinion it has to be approached, it must be in a very different spirit. That is the view which the Government take, and which I ventured to submit to the House last night on the

subject of this Amendment. Therefore, Sir, we feel it to be impossible that Her Majesty's Government can make themselves the instrument or the organ for conveying the Address in its present form to the Crown. I have consulted the authorities of the House as to the method in which it is possible to deal with the situation in which we find ourselves. We are of opinion—we may be mistaken in that, and it is for the House to determine—that the Address, with the addition carried last night, does not express or convey the well-considered and deliberate judgment of the majority of this House, and therefore we should not be performing our duty if we allowed ourselves to be the instrument of conveying to the Sovereign that which is not the opinion of the majority of this House. The course which we intend to pursue is this: When the Address in its present form is put from the Chair we shall vote against that Address. It will then be possible for the Government to move a new Address to the Crown. [*Opposition laughter.*] I have said—and I should have thought that gentlemen opposite would have recognised the fact—that this is not a matter for ridicule. I have endeavoured, as far as I can, to treat it from a point of view which should commend itself to all Parties in this House—to deal with it from the point of view of the situation of all responsible Governments and of the House of Commons in its relations to the Crown and the House of Lords. That is my desire. I have stated at the commencement that the Government are responsible for the form of the Address which they carry up by one of their own officials to the Sovereign in answer to the Speech from the Throne. I am now going to read to the House the form of Address for which we are prepared to make ourselves responsible, and in order to mark that responsibility I shall venture myself to move it. The Address will then run—

"Most Gracious Sovereign, — We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, humbly assure Your Majesty that the measures recommended to our consideration shall receive our most careful attention, and we beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."

I cannot make that Motion, of course, until the Amendment now under the con-

sideration of the House is disposed of ; but unless it is desired to raise other Amendments, which I do not expect will be the desire of the House in present circumstances, when the Address is put from the Chair, I, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, shall propose to negative that Address, and then I shall propose, in the place of it, to substitute the Address which I have just read to the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman has certainly approached the consideration of an unexampled position in our Parliamentary history in a tone of gravity which befits so serious an occasion. He began his statement by alluding to the policy which he and those who sit near him upon that Bench have accepted with regard to the position of the House of Lords. I confess that, after that statement, I understand as little as I did before precisely what that policy is. It was shrouded in language of prophetic obscurity by the right hon. Gentleman, and, though I do understand the policy with regard to the House of Lords sketched out in the Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman now desires us to reverse, I confess I am as much in doubt as I ever was as to the view entertained by Her Majesty's Government. I only refer, however, to this part of the right hon. Gentleman's statement in order to say that I think he need not have introduced into it what he might have known was a gross perversion of an observation made by me on another occasion. He had the courage to say that I had laid down the doctrine embodying the views of myself and my friends that the House of Lords was to control the House of Commons. No such preposterous doctrine ever entered my mind, and no such statement ever escaped my lips. I have always regarded—and I still regard—the House of Lords as a useful and a necessary check in the general scheme of our Constitutional Governments, but the idea that the House of Lords is to control this or any other branch of the Legislature is one which no Conservative statesman ever has or ever could utter. However, I pass from that to what is more germane to the subject before us—namely, the addition to the Address carried in the House last night. The right hon. Gentleman has repeated to-day the argument

which he used yesterday against the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton. I have not a single word of criticism to pass upon the argument by which he endeavoured unsuccessfully last night to persuade the House that the Amendment should be rejected. The right hon. Gentleman in this matter has been more fortunate in convincing us than in convincing his friends, for I observe from a brief glance at the Division List that if Members of the Government be excluded there remain 90 Unionists who supported the Government and but 30 independent Gladstonian Home Rulers who expressed by their votes in the Lobby that confidence in the Government of their choice which, so far as I know in Parliamentary history, has never yet been refused to an Administration which professed to command a majority in this House. However, Sir, I suppose a night's reflection has shown the supporters of the Government that there was more weight in the argument addressed to them last night and repeated to-day by the Leader of the House than they had at first sight been disposed to imagine, and the question is really only the question, how the Government can give their followers an opportunity of eating humble pie—no, I will not use that word—how they can, most conveniently and consistently with the Orders of the House, give their friends an opportunity of saying on Wednesday precisely the reverse of that which they said on Tuesday. I desire to give the Government every assistance. I wish to renew to-day the support which I was ready to give them yesterday upon the same question ; and when the right hon. Gentleman proposes to follow the course which he has sketched out to us, I, and I believe all my friends, will be found in the Lobby with him. How many other gentlemen will be found to reverse the vote, which I presume they gave with deliberation and with a full knowledge of its consequences yesterday, we cannot say until the numbers are declared. I shall only say, in conclusion, that while I shall do my best to endeavour to reverse the ridiculous decision which the House came to yesterday, I must make one word of comment on the extraordinary and absolutely unexampled position into which Her Majesty's Government have dragged the House on this occasion. Such a thing has never yet been heard of in our

Parliamentary history, that the Address to Her Majesty should have to be recalled on the Motion of the very persons who originally proposed it, that they should have to reject their own Address as amended by their own supporters, reject it with contempt, and bring forward in language unfamiliar to our ears and unknown to our precedents a new form of Address in which we are to express our thanks to Her Most Gracious Majesty. The Government have got themselves and have got us into a great difficulty. We shall do our best to get the Government out of it. We cannot, indeed, wholly extricate them from the humiliations which have been poured upon their undeserving heads by their own supporters; but what we can we certainly will do, and the Government may count upon us, the Conservative Party, on this as on all other occasions, to support the ancient constitution and practice of this House.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I have listened to observations not precisely complimentary of the two Front Benches on the excellent Amendment which I moved last night and which I carried. All I can say in regard to it is—"It is a poor thing, but mine own." As has been said, the Amendment is divided into two parts. The first declares that the power now exercised by the House of Lords to prevent the passing of Bills should cease. I do not gather that the Government are opposed to that in substance. It has been urged that I was claiming for Her Majesty powers that do not exist under the Constitution. I was doing nothing of the kind. I was simply using words which are ordinarily used in the Queen's Speech and in the Address in reply thereto. We know perfectly well that the whole thing is a sham. It is only a little complimentary correspondence which is carried on by Ministers with themselves. I was obliged to use the technical terms. If any gentleman will look at the Queen's Speech he will see that such and such a Bill will be submitted. That does not mean actually that it will be submitted by Her Majesty: it is her Ministers who intend to submit it. In the same way, when in my Amendment I pray Her Majesty that the powers at present exercised by the House of Lords shall cease, of course I mean that the Constitutional means shall be adopted—that is to say,

that Her Majesty's Ministers, who are the real persons addressed, shall bring in a Bill to put an end to those powers. The second paragraph has also been criticised. I am told that I suggest a perfectly monstrous and un-Constitutional thing when I ask that when a Bill is rejected by the Lords they shall not remain absolute masters of the situation. All I ask is that the same course shall be pursued as was adopted in 1831—that is to say, that Her Majesty, by the advice of her responsible Ministers, shall create such a number of Peers as will swamp the resistance of the Lords. That is perfectly Constitutional. It has been acted upon before. The threat will be enough. The advantage of being a Peer is this—that there are so few of them. If we were all Dukes, who would care to be a Duke? It is certain that if you were to threaten the House of Lords that if they resisted Bills sent up by this House 500 Dukes would be created they would give way at once. I am not going to believe that the Radical Party in this country is composed of such contemptible men as not to contain within its ranks 500 who could be trusted, if sent to the Lords for a specific purpose, not to vote on the other side a few days afterwards. I am surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has such a poor opinion of the great Democratic Party. At any rate, I will undertake to find 500 men to-morrow ready to go up to the House of Lords and to vote down the majority there. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking in the name of the Government, says that this matter is to be approached without levity. I always hear that complaint made when any sort of Resolution is brought in which it does not please Her Majesty's Ministers to accept at once. When my right hon. Friend has treated a thing with levity they have complained of it; when he has treated it ponderously they have complained of his ponderosity. For my part, I do not at present know what the Government intend to do upon this subject. I want to know two things—how and when the Government intend to deal with this matter? They tell me they are going to revolve it in their own minds without levity; that they are going to arrive some day at some sort of decision. My contention has been throughout that the supporters of the Government outside

this House have already arrived at their decision, and that decision is in accordance with the Amendment which I submitted. I defy the Chancellor of the Exchequer to go to any Liberal or Radical meeting in any part of the country where such a Motion as mine would not be received with unanimous applause. The Party have made their decision: we are their Representatives, and the Government are our representatives. I do not recognise the Government as my masters for an instant. I have always regarded them as the servants of the majority in this House. I am not going into technicalities; but I will say that whether you take the majority of Members on this side of the House or the vast majority of Liberals outside, they are with me in this matter. They demand prompt, speedy, and drastic action. They do not care outside whether—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in Order in referring to this matter.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I will not pursue these remarks. With regard to the kindly support with which the Leader of the Opposition intends to furnish the Government, let me point out that yesterday he gave them 90 men, and still the Government were in a minority. The Government had the support of 30 independent Gladstonians, and 149 gentlemen voted against them and for my Resolution. The Resolution was not intended as a Vote of Want of Confidence; it was simply intended to urge them to greater activity in this matter, and to point out to them what the feeling of the House is. I think we have done that pretty clearly. The Government may withdraw the Address or not, as they please. I do not bother myself about Addresses; but I hope they will take to heart what has been told them by the Division last night—that they will not wait for years, but will as speedily as possible bring in a clear specific Bill placing the power where it ought to be, in the hands of the Representatives of the people.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Before the question raised by the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has passed away I should like to make one or two very brief observations.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I rise to Order. I wish to know what is the Question before the House, and if it

will be the right of every Member, whether honourable or right honourable, to interfere in this discussion?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no Question before the House, but it is usual to allow the Leaders of responsible Parties to make observations on occasions such as the present.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is not the right hon. Member for East Mauchester the Leader of the Unionist Party?

[No answer was returned.]

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I can assure the House that I will make a very brief demand upon its patience and its courtesy. I am glad to see that undoubtedly the difficulty in which the House and the Government have been placed will now be, temporarily at any rate, avoided by adopting the course which has been suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Both sections of the Unionist Party will assist the Government to retrieve their defeat of yesterday. But I want to ask, what is to follow? What is the position which is made for this House by what has taken place? The hon. Member for Northampton stated that the Amendment was not a Vote of Want of Confidence. I do not think it is a Constitutional doctrine to say, for a Member to pretend that it is in his power to say, whether a proposition which he has made and which the Government has rejected is or is not a Vote of Want of Confidence. That depends entirely on the treatment which is accorded to the proposition by the Government itself, and in the present instance the Chancellor of the Exchequer has distinctly shown that in the mind of the Government the Amendment which was carried against the Government was a Vote of Want of Confidence, and unless it is now formally rescinded by the House then the natural consequences will follow. Well, but what is the position? This Amendment, treated by the Government as a Vote of Want of Confidence, was carried by a proportion of those who call themselves supporters of the Government in the proportion of five to one of the independent supporters, while 147 of the ordinary supporters of the Government voted against them.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is now going rather beyond the limits of Order.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I will accept your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and will conclude in a sentence. I think, Sir, that under the circumstances which I have described, and which are within the knowledge of the House, it is quite time that the Government sought a new mandate.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (FINANCIAL BUSINESS.)

RESOLUTION.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have already stated to the House the course we propose to pursue on the Address, but of course it can only be pursued when the Debate on the Amendment, now under consideration, has been concluded. But I have on the Paper a Notice referring to our business, which must be brought forward, and I propose now to make a Motion. Everybody in this House will feel that for the purpose of conducting the business it is necessary the Government should have the full time of the House up to the date mentioned in the Motion, which I now ask leave to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That until and including Thursday the 29th of March Financial Business do have priority on every day for which it may be appointed, and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed, and be not interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House except Standing Order No. 5; but after such business is disposed of no other opposed business shall be taken. That Standing Order No. 11 be suspended, and the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to every day of the week."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not at all desire to delay the House over this Motion, but it is very desirable that we should come to a clear understanding as to where we stand in the matter. There should be no difficulty in knowing that exactly. The Government finds itself under the necessity, in order to carry out the law, to ask for exceptional powers, and to ask the House, in consequence, to curtail the ordinary privileges of discussion both on the Address and of the Estimates. Then, as I understand, in return for the concession on these points, they are prepared to give us after Easter days on which to discuss three important topics, which otherwise we should have had the opportunity of discussing at this

stage. These are the general policy of naval construction, East Indian finance, and Uganda. The Government also agree that no controversial business shall be introduced between now and the 29th or the 31st of March—that is, during the period for which the exceptional powers are taken—though, of course, public necessity may require the Government to go beyond the strict line of merely financial discussion. They also arrange that no private Members' business shall be taken on those days when Financial Business does not occupy the whole time of the House, and when the Financial Business is concluded they will move the adjournment of the House. There is one more point I wish to name. Last year a ruling was given, not, I think, by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but by some gentleman acting as Chairman of Committees, which, if it is to be held to apply to the discussions to which I have referred, will preclude the full discussion of questions relating to the Navy on particular Votes in Committee of Supply. It is evident that if that Rule is to hold good the discussion to be allowed after Easter must take place with the Speaker in the Chair. I hope, therefore, the Government will make provision either that they shall be held with the Speaker in the Chair, or, if otherwise, that fair and legitimate latitude shall be given to all gentlemen who wish to discuss generally the questions involved. These are the points on which the Government have informally given us very satisfactory assurances; and if they are now prepared to repeat them, I shall not think it desirable in any way to resist this Motion or to prolong the discussion upon it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I accept fully what the right hon. Gentleman has stated. It is the intention of the Government, in asking for indulgence from all parts of the House, to arrange business so as to give hon. Members as little inconvenience as possible at Easter, when it is customary to take no controversial business of the character referred to. As to the Debate on the Navy, we will take care, as it must be the desire of the Government that there should be the fullest discussion of the subject, that, either with the Speaker in the Chair or in Committee, there shall be no limitation of the discussion.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said, he must press the right hon.

Gentleman for a more favourable response to the appeal he made to him on the previous day on behalf of private Members. He would like to receive if not an assurance, at any rate an expression of opinion, that on the conclusion of the Financial Business the first four Wednesdays would be left at the disposal of private Members; otherwise he did not see on what principle hon. Members were to act in assigning dates for the Bills they wished to put down. Could not the right hon. Gentleman give them something to guide them?

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, that if they were to get the Government out of one of those difficulties it was always getting into some fair terms ought to be offered them. Important Votes affecting the Army and the Navy were to be taken before Easter, as well as some Civil Service Votes not quite so important perhaps. There was also a Vote on Account to be taken. Surely they ought to have some assurance as to the Army Estimates, which were in the same position as the Navy Estimates, and, from one point of view, were in a stronger position. There ought to be a reasonable opportunity for discussing them after Easter; and he asked for a promise that on some Vote in the Army Estimates there should be an opportunity allowed of raising the whole question of Army administration. As there had been a distinct promise that the Ordnance Votes should not be taken till they had the Report of the Explosives Committee, if the Votes for the Ordnance Factories could not be postponed, and they were told they could not, but he personally held there was no emergency in regard to them—he asked that some other arrangement might be made for discussing the subject. He was bound to point out that the refusal of the Government to treat the workmen in their explosives factories in the same way as workmen had to be treated in private explosives factories raised a very important question which needed full discussion.

*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) said, he had to ask for an assurance that contentious Committees would not be appointed before Easter. There was, he believed, a proposal to appoint a Grand Committee of Scotch Members, with a certain number of English Members added, to deal with Scotch Bills.

He hoped no such contentious Committee would be appointed before Easter.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): May I point out with reference to the Navy Estimates that the proposals of the Government for the increase of the Navy will not be in our hands till Friday next, and we are not to have the explanatory Memorandum until Saturday, and yet we are to be asked to discuss the Estimates on Monday? It is clear that this will not allow sufficient time, even to those who have knowledge of the question, to come to any conclusion as to the proposals of the Government, and much less to challenge them. Last year general discussion was restricted in Committee of Supply; and I therefore hope that, if no impediment is placed in the way of getting the Votes for men and money before Easter, it will be understood that after Easter the discussion of naval policy shall take place with the Speaker in the Chair, so that we may be able to go into the whole question without having our remarks curtailed, as undoubtedly they would be in Committee of Supply.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): We ought to have a pledge that the Government will not take Tuesdays and Fridays for a month after Easter. Private Members have given notice of a large number of Motions, and they ought not to be deprived of the opportunity of discussing them.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): The subject of the Royal Naval Reserve, which last Session we were unable to discuss, ought also to be discussed with the Speaker in the Chair.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The noble Lord opposite has asked me for an expression of opinion, but I am afraid that an expression of opinion from a person in my position would be understood as a pledge. I am sorry to say I am unable to give any pledge or express any opinion as to the disposal of the time of the House after Easter. After Easter unquestionably the Army Votes and all other matters will have a proper amount of time allotted to them.

MR. HANBURY said, the Ordnance Factory Vote was separate from the Army Vote.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am not prepared to give any other pledge. As to the Shipbuilding Vote, I have already stated that every opportunity will be

given for discussing the Navy in all its branches. I cannot go further, and I hope that will be accepted by the House.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square) : As to the last declaration, I would remark that hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House wish to reserve not only full liberty for discussion, but the possibility of putting Notices on the Paper with the Speaker in the Chair, when an opportunity will be given to challenge the policy of the Government. It would be impossible to do that on a Vote in Committee, and what my hon. Friend wishes is not to be precluded from putting a Notice of Motion on the Paper which would be out of Order in Committee.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I cannot say more than this : that if the Opposition wish to challenge the policy of the Government there is always a very short way of doing so. I desire to act up to what I said, and to give every opportunity for discussion. I may remind the House of the difficulties in which we are placed. In 1868, when Lord Derby resigned and Mr. Disraeli succeeded him, the Navy Estimates were actually voted without any discussion whatever. The discussion on the Navy did not take place until May. We are in quite as great difficulties as to the point of time, but we do not ask anything like that indulgence, as we have assigned two days. I am sorry to make these demands on the indulgence of the House, and I hope that, under the circumstances in which the House finds itself, it will grant us that latitude and accept our assurance that it is not only our duty, but our desire, to give full opportunity for the discussion on the Navy.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : By the leave of the House, I desire to say that we have not the least desire to embarrass the Government, and we accept the statement of the right hon. Gentleman not only in the letter, but in the spirit of his pledges. To clear up one question, I would say, with regard to the Ordnance Factory Vote, what my hon. Friend wants is a confirmation of the pledge given by the Secretary for War : that there shall be some pledge given that an opportunity shall be found at a suitable period to discuss the Vote.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I readily give that pledge, and it shall be fulfilled in the most ample way. It is true that the Ordnance Factory Vote

is a separate Vote, but I think by a little ingenuity an opportunity may be found on the Army Vote to discuss it.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had great feeling for the difficulties in which the Government found themselves, but he (Mr. Bowles) had far more feeling for the difficulty in which Members of the Opposition found themselves. Before Easter last year the House had had 16 days in Committee, but this year they would only have four or five. They were asked to deal with the Army in one day, but one day was not sufficient. He rose, however, to point out that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had omitted to tell them when the Vote on Account would be taken.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I will state that to-morrow.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN : The Secretary for War has stated, in reply to the hon. Member for Preston, that he will take care that an opportunity is given to discuss the Ordnance Vote. The Birmingham Members take a deep interest in this Vote owing to the new policy pursued with regard to the factory at Sparkbrook, and they desire to have full opportunity for discussion. There will be two opportunities, I understand, for this discussion before Easter—one on the Supplementary Vote and the other on the general Vote ; but if it would be convenient to the Government that the discussion on this matter should be taken later, all I would ask is that we should have some pledge similar to that given to the hon. Member for Preston.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The circumstances of the two cases are not similar. On the subject referred to by the hon. Member for Preston there is an inquiry going on. No Report has yet been received, and it is, therefore, impossible to discuss the matter at present. But the subject in which the Birmingham Members are interested can be discussed as well this week as two or three weeks hence ; therefore, I see no reason why it should not be taken to-morrow or on Friday.

*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, that ordinarily they had the general discussion on the Army on the Question that the Speaker do leave the Chair, or on the first Vote. Owing to the exigencies of the Service, they were asked to give up

those opportunities for discussion. If they consented, would some opportunity be given to discuss the general question of the Army on some other Vote?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, it was intended that there should be an opportunity for general discussion given on Friday; but if that was not sufficient, they could resort to the old plan that had been adopted on many previous occasions, of allowing the general discussion on some other Vote which might be fixed on for the general convenience of hon. Members.

Question put, and agreed to.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MOTION FOR ADDRESS. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Further Amendment proposed to Main Question, as amended [13th March], "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as followeth:—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament:

We humbly pray Your Majesty that the power now enjoyed by persons not elected to Parliament by the possessors of the Parliamentary franchise to prevent Bills being submitted to Your Majesty for Your Royal approval shall cease, and we respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary, Your Majesty will, with and by the advice of Your responsible Ministers, use the power vested in Your Majesty to secure the passing of this much-needed reform."

And which Amendment was, at the end of the Question, to add the words,—

"Humbly to represent to Your Majesty that the administration of the Law in Ireland in the course of the last few months, by the encouragement offered to the eviction of tenants and the destruction and burning of their houses, by the prosecution of Representatives of the people and others for efforts to secure shelter for the evicted people, by the continuance of the practice of jury-packing, and by the suppression of public meetings, has caused grave disappointment in Ireland, and tends directly to produce that contempt for and hostility to the Law and its administration which accompanied in so marked a degree the administration of Irish affairs by Your Majesty's late Government."—*(Mr. Clancy.)*

Question again proposed, "That those words be there added."

Debate resumed.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW IN IRELAND.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that last night the Chief Secretary had made a clear and explicit defence of the action he had felt it his duty to take at this juncture. He had defended jury-packing, which was the charge brought by the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin. Well, he (Mr. Russell) did not believe that in Cork, or in any other place in Ireland, within recent times, it had been the habit of the counsel of the Crown to order jurors to stand by either because they were Catholics or Protestants. He knew that had been affirmed, and loudly affirmed, by hon. Gentlemen in the past, but he did not believe it. The right hon. Gentleman had said last night that such a charge could not lie against him in regard to his action in Cork. The right hon. Gentleman said that six of the jury were Catholics and six Protestants, but that would not suffice. There were 72 jurors, and the prisoner challenged 19. The Crown challenged 41. They challenged to the extreme limit of their power, because if they had gone further there would have been no jury to try the case. The essence of jury-packing was ordering men of a specific class to stand by, and he maintained that the right hon. Gentleman had exercised that right to the fullest extent possible. He did not believe that the men were ordered to stand by because they were Catholics. He did not believe that men were excluded from juries on account of their religion. They were excluded because it was known that from their Nationalist sympathies the men would not return a verdict in accordance with the evidence. And that was the reason why jurors had been ordered to stand aside all over the country in days that were gone, which action the supporters of the Government never tired of declaiming against. One of the great charges brought against the Leader of the Opposition was that after the Maryborough trial he made what was called "Peter the Packer" an Irish Judge. But what had the present Government done in the case of the man who packed this jury? They had made him a County Court Judge. No doubt he would be an admirable County Court Judge. It certainly did not lie in the

mouth of the Chief Secretary to object to the Leader of the Opposition making a jury-packer a Judge when, on the first opportunity he got, he made his own jury-packer a Judge. So much for jury-packing. He came now to the question of evictions, and he was very sorry to find that so many English Liberal Members were absent. What had they been doing during the 18 months of the right hon. Gentleman's administration? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford, who was now President of the Local Government Board, went to Ireland when the Leader of the Opposition was contending with the forces of disorder, and, speaking at Galway and elsewhere, told those Irish tenants who had been evicted by Lord Clanricarde and others that within a month after the return to power of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian evictions would cease; and he told them to stand by their combination: in other words, he told them to stand by the Plan of Campaign, which was an illegal conspiracy, and he told them that these evictions would cease the moment he and his Party came into power. The right hon. Gentleman had been in power for 18 months. Had evictions ceased? During the 18 months the right hon. Gentleman had been in power, more than 1,000 men, tenants and sub-tenants, had been evicted from their holdings. He did not complain of the right hon. Gentleman for protecting the Sheriff in the execution of his duty. When the right hon. Gentleman went to Dublin Castle he found that these writs had to be executed, and that according to the oath he had taken he was no more at liberty to refuse the protection of the police to the Sheriffs and officers of the law than he was at liberty to break the law in any other respect. When the late Government were in power, what did the President of the Board of Trade mean by going to Cardiff and assenting to a resolution calling upon the Government of the day not to give the forces of the Crown to assist in carrying out the law? What right had men holding the position of Cabinet Ministers to go through the country and make what they knew perfectly well was a totally impossible demand? These gentlemen went all over Ireland encouraging resistance to the law. They came back to England

and represented scenes in Ireland on magic-lantern slides. Where had they been during the last 18 months? Where were they to-day? The Irish tenants now knew that it was not sympathy with them that instigated these visits to Ireland by strolling Gladstonian politicians. It was to make electoral capital for themselves. With regard to the De Freyne estate, he had been there. The Leader of the Opposition would remember the Glenbeigh evictions in 1887. He would remember what was said about them both in the House and on the platform. Now, he had seen Glenbeigh and he had seen the De Freyne estate, and there was no comparison between them. The De Freyne tenants were far more miserable than the Glenbeigh tenants. One house was burnt at Glenbeigh in 1887. Under the protection of the right hon. Gentleman's police 13 houses were thrown down and burned on the De Freyne estate, and there was not a Gladstonian Member who had whispered it throughout England or in this House. He had never seen a more ghastly sight than the De Freyne estate, unless it were the neighbouring estate of Lord Dillon. They had there an estate of pauper tenants who could not pay their rent. There they had a long stretch of land almost bogland; they had between the two estates between 6,000 and 7,000 human beings crowded together, but the two estates would not provide sustenance for 600 tenants. The hon. Member for North Dublin was perfectly accurate when he said last night that the tenants did not pay their rent on Lord De Freyne's estate. That would be an impossibility. There was no economic rent out of land of that kind. But when he had said all this it did not affect the action of the Chief Secretary, who was not in a position to prevent it, and who only had his duty to perform. He (Mr. Russell) did not know Lord De Freyne, and had never seen him in his life, but there was this to be said for him, at all events: that he had succeeded to this wretched inheritance, lived upon the estate, and, he supposed, tried to do his best. If they were not going to abolish the right of private property altogether, what could be done in cases such as this? Let them take the case of the man Barrett, whose house was burned down, and he would take it as a sample of the whole. In 1882 his rent was £16

a year, and under the Arrears Act of 1882 rent amounting to £76 10s. was wiped out by the landlord, the tenant getting a clean slate then. In May, 1883, there was a decree for a year and a-half's rent—that was to say, Barrett paid nothing after he had settled under the Arrears Act, and in October, 1883, judgment was given and the money paid. He was said to have sub-let his land to a man named Flannery, who farmed the land for him, and he went to England. The real truth was that he owed money to Flannery, and Flannery got possession of the land in order that the debt should be paid.

MR. HARRINGTON: He did not pay the rent.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, that in 1883 there was a decree for three years' rent. Barrett was made a caretaker, and he re-took possession, and he was in possession until December, 1893. With the exception of a year and a-half's rent Barrett had not paid a copper to Lord De Freyne since he settled. He could understand sympathy being expressed for these poor people, but they should not blame the law or the officers of the law who had to see to its execution. He could go through other cases, and show that they were all on fours with the case of Barrett—cases of pauper tenants who could not pay rent, and only paid it out of labour in England when it was paid. The case of Lord De Freyne was as sad a one as they could possibly have. He wanted to put a point to the Chief Secretary, and it was one upon which he ought to give an explanation. The course pursued by the Leader of the Opposition, when Chief Secretary, was this: The Sheriff went to the place, and the police stood by while the actual eviction was carried out, and after that was done the police retired, emergency men being left in the houses who were paid by the landlord, or the houses were barricaded up and left to their fate. This was done from 1886 to 1892. But on the De Freyne estate he did not find emergency men in possession, but he found the Royal Constabulary inside the ruins, protecting Lord De Freyne's property. This was out-Heroding Herod. The Conservative Government did not dare to do anything of the kind; but the present Chief Secretary converted the constabulary into emergency men.

MR. LOGAN (Leicestershire, S.) desired to say, that on the Olphert pro-

perty, during the Chief Secretaryship of the Leader of the Opposition, he saw the constabulary in charge of houses from which tenants had been evicted.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, the hon. Member was mistaken. Mr. Olphert had put caretakers into those ruined houses, and the right hon. Gentleman gave them police protection; but that was a different thing from converting the police into emergency men.

MR. LOGAN said, there were no caretakers in the houses, several of which were in the charge of the constabulary.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, his hon. Friend might have believed that that was the case, but the whole thing would have been utterly illegal, in his opinion. The constabulary might have been in the houses, but they were there for the purpose of protecting the caretakers, whereas the present Chief Secretary had used the police as emergency men, who had to be paid for by the landlords under the late Government.

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member has made that statement in print. I have submitted it to the persons concerned, and it is denied.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, he was there on the spot and spoke to them. He affirmed that it was so.

MR. HARRINGTON: So do I.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, that with all respect to the right hon. Gentleman, it was a thing he had personally witnessed, and he was not going to accept the anonymous information of the right hon. Gentleman on the subject. He must stand by what he saw for himself. As regarded the poverty of the people and the wretchedness of their holdings, these evictions were more atrocious than any he had seen in Ireland. All England was made to ring with the atrocities attributed to the Leader of the Opposition, but no Gladstonian Member had said a word in the House or out of it about the action of the present Chief Secretary. This showed that the Gladstonians were not animated by sympathy with the Irish tenants, but that the object of their action was simply to plant themselves on the Ministerial side of the House. He wished to allude now to the subject of public meetings. He did not deny the right of the Government to suppress them; he held that in many cases they ought to be sup-

pressed; but the Chief Secretary had protested against the suppression of them, and at Tipperary lent his personal assistance to disorder. ["Oh!"] That was the result; and if the right hon. Gentleman had not gone there there would have been no disorder. A good deal of the display was got up simply to impress the right hon. Gentleman. The meetings suppressed by the late Chief Secretary were mainly meetings convened to intimidate those who had taken farms from which tenants had been evicted, and the Government were right in suppressing them. What had the present Chief Secretary done? The only difference between the two right hon. Gentlemen was that the present Chief Secretary had played with the thing. When a man took a vacant farm he was denounced as a land-grabber, and, supposing he refused to be intimidated, a public meeting was arranged to be held on the farm, or at the gate of the farm, and what did the right hon. Gentleman do? Did he state emphatically that the meeting would not be allowed? Not at all. He would not allow a meeting to be held on the farm, or within a mile of it; but what difference did that make? The right hon. Gentleman allowed meetings to be held just beyond the mile limit, so that they were effective for the intended purpose of intimidation. That was simply playing with the law, and allowing these men to carry out their object. It was all very well to talk about the state of agrarian Ireland at the present time, but there was a good deal that had not come to light. No doubt, the change of venue in the case of the Clare prisoners was a change made under the Winter Assize Act; but at the Clare Spring Assizes 117 cases of crime were reported by the police; in five cases only were persons brought to trial; in four cases the juries disagreed; and in one case a murderous assault was reduced to a common assault. This was the result of trying such cases in County Clare. But at Cork the prisoners from Clare were convicted. At Limerick Mr. Justice Gibson declared that there was absolute immunity in the County of Limerick for agrarian crime. And the right hon. Gentleman described this as a satisfactory state of matters. It was satisfactory for those who committed crime, but not for those who lived without that protection from the law to which

they were entitled. He did not find fault with the Chief Secretary for carrying out the law. He was bound to do it, and every man who took his office would be bound to do it, and he honoured the right hon. Gentleman for the effort he had made; but, at the same time, he did not think that Members of this House who were active in a crusade against the right hon. Gentleman opposite for doing the same thing as the present Chief Secretary had done should be silent when these things were taking place—when there had been more than 1,000 evictions in 18 months. He knew that the figures for agrarian crime were low, but there was a great deal under the surface by means of agencies. A change of circumstances might occur, the old machinery might be let loose at any moment, and to be forewarned was to be forearmed.

MR. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said, that when the Chief Secretary rose the previous night to address the House in defence of his Irish administration he regretted that the right hon. Gentleman, owing to his anxiety to reply early in the Debate, had not heard the whole of the facts of this lamentable case of the De Freyne estate.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. HARRINGTON said, he regretted the intervention of the Chief Secretary at such an early stage of the Debate all the more because of the extraordinary statements in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. One thing was perfectly clear, and that was that either the right hon. Gentleman had no opportunity of making himself conversant with the facts of the case, or he had been grossly and even criminally deceived by those on whom he trusted for his information. The right hon. Gentleman said the whole question was whether, in the De Freyne proceedings, the Government went one jot or tittle outside the limits in which they were bound to act? He would take up the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman, and he thought he would succeed in showing that not only did the Government act outside that which they were compelled to do by the law, but that almost every act of the Irish administration in connection with that estate was an act outside the scope

of its duties, and really an act of partisanship in the warfare between landlords and tenants in Ireland. He had had considerable experience of agitation in Ireland, and of cases of extraordinary partisanship by the Executive of the day in connection with agrarian disputes of this kind, but he had never known a case where the Executive had so completely and thoroughly let itself to the landlord class on the one side as against the tenants on the other in a more violently partisan manner than had been done on the De Freyne estate. It was rarely they found occupying the position of the right hon. Gentleman one in whom they had confidence, and in the case of the right hon. Gentleman it was painful for them to have to call attention to questions of this kind, but it was their duty to protect their people from gross maladministration of the law whomsoever might be the head of the Executive. He would not go into the character of the holdings on the De Freyne estate. They were well and ably touched upon in the speech* of the hon. Member for South Tyrone; and differing from that hon. Member so widely as he did on general questions, and altogether as to the purpose to which the hon. Member intended to apply his observations, he nevertheless thanked him for the sympathetic expressions he used towards the tenantry on that estate. In all, 24 or 25 evictions took place. The protection of the police was sought for them. He was not going to say that the protection of the police could or should be denied by the Chief Secretary of the day for the purpose of evictions, but he might observe that when the present right hon. Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) was Chief Secretary he exercised a very discriminating care and judgment in giving the police for the purposes of evictions. When application was made to that right hon. Gentleman for the assistance of the police—as appeared from his own statement extorted from him in the witness-box—he got all the facts before him, inquired into all the circumstances of the rent, valuation, and condition of the holding and the capacity of the tenant to pay, and without refusing the assistance of the Executive Government of the day, or putting himself in a position of being censured for absolute refusal, he brought all the pressure he could—and very successfully—upon the

landlord who was going in for wholesale evictions of that character. The case of the De Freyne estate was undoubtedly one which should have attracted the sympathy of the right hon. Gentleman, who when the application for police assistance was made should have exercised a more discriminating power. The right hon. Gentleman denied that he had granted the assistance of the police for the purpose of carrying out evictions. He would take up the right hon. Gentleman's challenge—a challenge to the effect that the Executive of the day had done nothing but what they were compelled to do. He maintained that not only had they done what they were not compelled to do, but they had deliberately and knowingly lent the services of the police for purposes which were absolutely illegal. And he submitted that the Minister was to be held responsible in that House for the action of the police. He had before him the facts of a case in which a police officer at the head of a force, the assistance of which had been given to carry out certain evictions, deliberately turned aside from the duty to which he had been appointed, and gave police protection to an act outside the scope of his duty. That was an officer, too, to whom the right hon. Gentleman paid high testimony on the previous night. He would cite the facts of the case. One of the tenants on the De Freyne estate—Mary Moran—was originally evicted in 1891. She re-took possession, and for a year and a half remained undisturbed. That was under the late Administration, and when the Crimes Act was in full force. The landlord might have summoned her for trespass, he might have re-executed his decree of possession, or he might have proceeded either under the provisions of the Crimes Act or of the ordinary law. But he did not care to do anything, so he allowed the woman to till and crop her land for over two years. But then came a series of evictions carried out by the agent, under the protection of the police officer, there being a perfectly friendly understanding between the two. The agent discarding the legal remedies open to him, went to the house under the protection of the police, broke in the door, removed the rafters, and allowed the roof to fall in. The Inspector of Police admitted in Court that he knew these acts to be illegal, and with that knowledge he deliberately went to see

them committed. The law laid down at the trial, which was an outcome of these evictions, was that an assembly, even to enforce a legal right, was unlawful, but it appeared that an agent who availed himself of the presence of the police to overawe the unfortunate tenantry was not to be proceeded against. Was that acting fairly as between the two parties in Ireland, as the Executive ought surely to do? If ever there was a case in which gross misconduct on the part of an agent ought to have been dealt with by the Government it was this case. The law had been overridden by an agent under the protection of the police, and the Executive of the day only awoke to a sense of the violation of the law when some of the hon. Members for Ireland went on to the land and endeavoured to secure shelter for the unfortunate tenants. Did the right hon. Gentleman intend to defend conduct such as that? In all his long experience of Irish administration he had never known a single case—and they had had many to deal with—under any administration in which the law had been so violated and in which the Executive had so unfairly taken up sides. There was another Statute which had been violated in this case—a Statute which called on the landlord or agent carrying out evictions to inform the relieving officer, so that food and shelter might be provided for the evicted. But no such notice was given, and yet the agent's conduct had been in no way re-sented by the Government of the day; the authorities had not put the law in force against him, and they had not punished him for his misconduct, although the breach of the law was perfectly plain and indisputable. The agent was never prosecuted, and the District Inspector, who was present, and who looked on while the roof of the house was being thrown down, received a high commendation for character from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary last evening. The right hon. Gentleman made another very remarkable statement last night. He had given as a reason for the presence of the police at these evictions in such large numbers that certain threats had been made in speeches delivered before the evictions. He (Mr. Harrington) did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was serious in that statement; because, as a matter of fact, there was no meet-

ing in connection with the evictions until a month after the house-breaking. The right hon. Gentleman, like all his predecessors, seemed to depend for his information on the very people whose conduct was the subject of complaint. The right hon. Gentleman declared, on the information supplied to him, that the police were not present when possession was taken of the houses and when the houses were demolished.

MR. J. MORLEY: I did not say that. I said that the police were not present when those houses of which the tenants had retaken forcible possession were levelled.

MR. HARRINGTON said, that if that was so the right hon. Gentleman had been misreported. But even that statement of the right hon. Gentleman could not be substantiated. There had been a good deal of controversy as to whether the police were or were not present protecting the persons engaged in the work of levelling the houses. The reason he (Mr. Harrington) and his friends drew so much attention to this subject of house levelling was because it was simply a policy of exasperation. The landlord could easily have obtained possession of the houses without resort to such a proceeding, and there could be no doubt that his object had been to exasperate his poor tenants and their neighbours, and the shopkeepers to whom they might be in debt—to create a feeling of bitterness in the minds of these unfortunate men, which was only too often the forerunner of crime and disorder. Yet in this case the officer of the police, and the Chief Secretary himself, must have known that it was the intention of the agent in this campaign of eviction to demolish the houses; and surely if ever there was a case in which a Chief Secretary had a right to exercise discretion as to whether he would give or withhold police protection for a time—whether he would delay proceedings or allow them to take place instantly—this was the case. The case was one which was calculated to create bad blood, where it was the intention of the landlord, not only to evict the tenants, but to shut them out of all hope of ever living in their old homes, and the assistance of the police had been given, without question, in support of that policy. As to whether the police were or were not present at the levellings, here was what the agent had himself said at the trial. He was asked—

Mr. Harrington

"Did you speak to the police about this case?"

His answer was—

"I never talked to the police about the case; in fact, I knew the police would not be allowed to go with me in these cases.

Was Barretts' name on the list you gave to the police?—No.

Had you any conversation about going to Barretts'?—I may have had.

Had you any conversation with Mr. Roberts (the District Inspector)?—I had. As I was going to Mr. Roberts he said, 'Is this an eviction?' and I said 'No.'

That showed that this police functionary knew that he was going to assist the agent in doing what was an illegal act. In cross-examination the agent said—

"The police were not present when I was knocking down the houses, but they were within whistling distance."

Mr. J. MORLEY: I never mentioned "whistling distance."

Mr. HARRINGTON: No; but the witness did. Surely if the distinction the right hon. Gentleman desired to draw was that the police were not "present" because they were not physically on the spot, although they were within hail, he (Mr. Harrington) failed to see any force in his contention. The cross-examination went on—

"Did Mr. Roberts remonstrate with you?—I think he said he would not give police protection for levelling houses."

Mr. J. MORLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARRINGTON: But he was there. Virtually the assistance of the police was given in support of an illegal act, although they might not have been standing round the houses whilst they were demolished. The agent said "the police were not out of the district when the levelling took place." He was asked—

"Were they 500 yards away?—I do not know where they were.

Did he (Mr. Roberts) make any remonstrance with you?—No.

He never raised any doubt in your mind as to the legality of the business you were going to do?—No."

The tenant Moran, it was well known, had been in possession of his house for three years, with the knowledge of the landlord, and had cropped the land for three years, and the agent threw him out without a new process of eviction. The District Inspector and the police then proceeded with the agent to the house of another tenant, where the same thing took place. Barrett had been evicted in 1892. Immediately afterwards the man took re-possession;

and it was stated in evidence at the Petty Sessions Court that the agent, long subsequent to the eviction, visited him or his family on the holding, and had a conversation with them as to the payment of rent, and the usual notice was served upon him to come into the office and pay his rent. Any lawyer or Judge in any other country would have held that those circumstances raised a presumption of tenancy which would have rendered it inevitable to take the case before a jury. He (Mr. Harrington) called attention to this, because it was in the case of Barrett that another action of the Executive was founded, including the prosecution of two of his hon. Colleagues. Altogether, there were 24 or 25 illegal evictions carried out, and 16 houses thrown down; and the action of the agent in the matter, although the Chief Secretary had not taken cognisance of it, was highly questionable, if not positively criminal. For what did the agent do? He forcibly put Barrett out of possession without the presence of the Sheriff, and he then lifted the roof tree and threw down the house. On the following day, passing the ruins, the agent observed smoke ascending from what had been the hearth of this unfortunate family. He immediately went up to the ruins and set fire to them. The agent set fire to the roof while a child was sheltered in the ruins; but the Executive took no step in the matter. He (Mr. Harrington) did not mean to suggest that the agent knew that there was someone in the ruins when he fired them, but, at any rate, he exposed himself to the severe penalties of the Statute bearing upon the firing of dwellings. Although the house was in ruins, the agent regarded it as a dwelling likely to give refuge to the evicted family, hence his final effort to destroy it. The child in the ruins was burnt, and, although the fact was published in the newspapers, the Executive did not put the agent on his trial. When, after the lapse of a month, the unfortunate man Barrett himself attempted to vindicate the law, the Crown was in no way represented at the trial. The agent was duly returned for trial by two Magistrates; but presumably because he was a land agent, and had resources at his command, a motion was made in the Court of Queen's Bench in Dublin—a motion almost unheard of in this country—to quash the decision of the Magis-

trates committing the man for trial. To show that there was at least some shred of character still attaching to Irish legal procedure, the Court held that it had not power to interfere, but what did it do? Why, the Lord Chief Justice in delivering judgment entered into the question of the conduct of the agent in setting fire to Barrett's house, and held that it did not constitute an offence under the law. It was a monstrous doctrine to lay down that, because the house was in a state of ruin, it could not, therefore, be regarded as a dwelling under the Act. Surely the right doctrine to hold was that the State intended the provision to have a bearing on the safety of human life in places which afforded shelter to human beings, whether of a permanent or temporary kind. There was something further. The case went before the Grand Jury of Roscommon, and Mr. Justice Madden appealed to them rather than to an ordinary jury, and laid down the same principle as that laid down by the Lord Chief Justice, in that way fortifying the Grand Jury—a member of which was the brother of Lord De Freyne, the employer of this agent, in throwing out the bill. The Irish Members complained that the illegal acts to which he had drawn attention should have been allowed to pass without notice. This land agent was on the Commission of the Peace for County Roscommon when he burnt this dwelling, when he overrode the law, refusing to avail himself of its ordinary provisions for re-assuming possession of this property. He was still retained on the Commission of the Peace, notwithstanding these illegal acts. What the Irish Members complained of was that, although this gentleman violated the law, the Chief Secretary never set the law in motion against him, and that the first act of the Irish Executive—the first evidence they gave of authority in this matter—was, a month after the evictions, to take proceedings against two hon. Members and several other persons, who went down to the district to provide shelter for the unfortunate evicted tenants. The houses had been demolished, and the people were sheltering themselves as best they could amongst the ruins of their homes. His colleagues, by means of their own money and the funds they collected in the district, endeavoured to procure shelter for the homeless. That

Mr. Harrington

was the criminal act the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary thought it his duty to resent. Mr. Blakeney was allowed to go by the board. The right hon. Gentleman said that in the course he took he was enforcing the law, but that was not the case. It was clear to anyone who studied the matter that the administration had been lending itself to the advancement of the interests of the landlords. One of the summonses was defended on the ground that its object was the maintenance of the public peace. The charge was that of "unlawful assembly." Going on to the farm of the man Barrett—which he had tilled for two years after his eviction without dispute, and as to the payment of the rent for which he was in negotiation with the agent—was held, forsooth, to be "unlawful assembly." He could understand such a charge being made if it had reference to going upon a holding immediately after an eviction which had taken place according to due process of law; but the policy of proceeding against men for going upon land two years after an eviction seemed to him merely making up the arrears of the work of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester, and vindicating that right hon. Gentleman's policy. Did anyone suppose that if the meeting for which his hon. Colleagues were prosecuted had taken place the day before Barrett's house was burnt, on the invitation of Barrett, the law would have been set in motion against them? Certainly not. Then, if the act of the agent in disposing Barrett was not legal how could the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary contend that for two or three men to go on the land a month after that illegal act constituted an "unlawful assembly"? But other summonses were for trespassing on the lands of Lord De Freyne for the purpose of building houses. Lord De Freyne himself had issued summonses for that; therefore, what need had there been for the Executive to take the matter up? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary asked if they could show that he had gone one jot or tittle beyond what he was bound to do; and in reply he (Mr. Harrington) declared that the right hon. Gentleman had done more than he was justified in doing, unless his object was to show himself a partisan of the landlord. The hon. Member for South Tyrone made

some reference to the condition of these tenants, and asked them what they thought it would be possible for Lord De Freyne to do. Well, he did not know anyone in Ireland who held the doctrine that Lord De Freyne and other landlords was not entitled to a fair rent. He (Mr. Harrington) disclaimed any intention of going on Lord De Freyne's property with the object of depriving his Lordship of any rent he was justly entitled to, but the hon. Member for South Tyrone had himself said that not one penny of rent could be earned on the estate—that the rent was merely a charge for living in one's native country. The unfortunate man Barrett had earned £16 or £17 in England during the harvest, and he had returned home to pay the rent. The amount he tendered was refused, and he was borrowing the remainder from some friends. There was no disposition to avoid the payment of rent, but everyone knew that these charges were kept constantly hanging over the heads of Irish tenants by their landlords. He would invite the hon. Member for South Tyrone to co-operate with the Nationalist Members in the endeavour to procure a settlement on the De Freyne estate. To give the hon. Member a proof of their earnestness and to show that they had no intention of carrying on the quarrel where fair treatment was offered to the tenants, he would say that they were prepared to rebuild the houses themselves, and to give one year's rent to the landlord if a settlement could be obtained. That offer they had made, and they were prepared to carry it out. The hon. Member for South Tyrone, from his knowledge of the state of things, must know that this offer was a fair one. He (Mr. Harrington) had brought under the notice of the Chief Secretary a condition of things on this estate which he was sure the right hon. Gentleman had no suspicion of when he spoke last evening. It was a fact, as had been pointed out by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, that the police had acted as caretakers on the De Freyne estate. He (Mr. Harrington) had been in the district for some time engaged in the defence of his colleagues, and he was able, from his own observation, to corroborate this statement. He had seen the police taking care of houses for weeks, no emergency men being employed. There had never been a case in Ireland

where the assistance of the police had been lent so completely and thoroughly to the landlord, to save him expense. When the people went up to their old holdings the police went up to them and warned them away, and after a time, as the people gathered courage and refused to be warned away, the police sent word to the landlord and the bailiff was despatched to put the people off the land. Police were stationed around the heaps of stones that were once the houses of these poor peasants. He had seen as many as 30 policemen so employed, and those people who declared to the Chief Secretary that these things were untrue were unworthy of the confidence of the right hon. Gentleman. Statements founded on testimony of such people were apt to shake the confidence of the Irish people in the present Irish Government.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, that by the indulgence of the House he wished to ask what the Chief Secretary was going to do after the explicit statements that had been made by the hon. Member who had just sat down and by himself as to the conduct of the police on the De Freyne estate? The statement which he (Mr. Russell) had to make was to this effect—that the present Chief Secretary had gone further in aid of the De Freyne property than the late Chief Secretary had gone in similar cases, and that he had absolutely planted members of the Royal Irish Constabulary in these ruined houses to do the work of caretakers for Lord De Freyne. He made that statement after having been there and seen the police in the dwellings and spoken to them; and he wished to ask the Chief Secretary whether, in view of the categorical statements that had been made by Members of the House, he was now prepared to make further inquiry into this matter?

MR. T. HARRINGTON said, that technically, of course, the police were not in the houses, but they were on the spot where the houses had been. They were standing within the walls, and would not allow anybody inside. Inside the four walls standing there was a temporary shelter for the police from the weather, and that constituted their being on the premises.

MR. J. REDMOND felt bound to state that he was on the estates and visited the houses on each occasion. He saw

the police inside the houses on more than one of the holdings. The roofs of all the tenants' dwellings had been removed and the walls somewhat broken; but shelters had been put up, and the police were in possession, and would not let anyone in.

MR. J. MORLEY said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down assumed his entire ignorance of the circumstances attending the evictions; but from the very first he apprehended they would give rise to trouble and much discussion, and gave orders that he should be informed day by day precisely of every particular—rent, individuals, and everything else connected with them. So thoroughly did he feel himself master of the facts that he believed he could stand a cross-examination upon every circumstance of the evictions as well as any Member who had taken part in the Debate. He was quite willing to verify what he was about to say. In answer to the particular question put to him, his clear and distinct impression was that the police were about these ruins; they were within the shelters, if the hon. Member liked to call them so, because they were obliged to be there in order to resist the declared intentions of some of the hon. Member's friends to come upon the ground and defy the law. He was determined that that should not be done if he could prevent it, but the police were not there in the least as emergency men for the purpose solely of assisting the landlords, as the hon. Member for South Tyrone had said. They were there, and were kept there, simply in order to prevent a breach of the peace taking place and a defiance of the law which gentlemen who ought to have known better had threatened to carry out.

DR. KENNY (Dublin, College Green) protested against the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman, who had no right to make such an attack upon his colleagues and himself. At the same time, they fully recognised that it was his most earnest desire to do justice to their country. But the right hon. Gentleman could not be entirely exonerated in this matter, and he would not, of course, allow himself to be exonerated at the expense of others. But the charge against him was this: When they looked around them and saw what had occurred under his *régime*, comparing it with those of his predecessors, they failed to perceive any marked difference. Chief

Secretaries came and went in Ireland, but the permanent officials remained; and the fault they found with him was that, like other Chief Secretaries, instead of endeavouring to get information elsewhere than from the accustomed channels, he contented himself with accepting statements from the very persons in Ireland of whom they ought to be most suspicious, and who were in most cases themselves the incriminated parties. The great majority of the permanent officials in Ireland were friends and nominees of the landlord party who had always looked upon the country as made for their special behoof and benefit, and not as a country of which they ought to be the obedient official servants. His reason for addressing the House was that the right hon. Gentleman seemed to draw a broad distinction between the jury-packing under the late Administration and the jury-packing which had recently been practised in Ireland under his own *régime*. The English idea had always been that this was a question of undue proportions of Protestants and Catholics; but they did not complain on that ground at all. There were many good Nationalists who were Protestants, and they did not care whether a juryman was a Protestant or a Catholic; but what they did care about, and bitterly complained of, was getting juries appointed by a process of selection altogether independent of religious convictions. The point was that juries had been so selected. A jury had been selected in Cork exactly as had been done by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor. That process of selection was what constituted the essence of jury-packing, which was one of the most damnable heresies in connection with Irish administration. He warned the Chief Secretary that if his administration was to proceed on these lines the Irish people would utterly fail to see what advantage it was to confer upon them. He offered the Irish people for this maladministration a Bill "hung up" indefinitely. "Hanging up" in Ireland had ever been the remedy of English statesmen for all Irish troubles and difficulties, and certainly the hanging up of the Home Rule Bill would not compensate the Irish people for the gross evil of jury-packing. The right hon. Gentleman was not the man to repudiate a single word of the great Leader whose

memory they had a right to honour, and Mr. Gladstone had said that this system of selecting juries—the jury-packing of which they complained—dared not be practised in England. The system was unknown in this country. No Minister of the Crown would hold Office for a day if he attempted to pack a jury. It was not done in the rattening cases in Sheffield. Rattening was put down by the ordinary law, not by packing juries. Mr. Gladstone in 1890 denounced as a public scandal the appointment of a Judge known in Ireland as “Peter the Packer” to the Chief Justiceship as a reward for his work at Maryborough. That was jury-packing as barefaced as ever occurred.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's) said, when it became his duty as a Member of the Independent Party to go down to Roscommon he went to carry out the law. What was the law? As he understood it, it meant the protection of the weak against the oppression of the strong. When he and his colleagues were about to address a meeting in Castlereagh they made their object quite plain. They did not use language to conceal their thoughts. They told the people their object in the presence of various notabilities called police-sergeants, who exercised their functions as kings of the villages adjacent. There were no higher authorities than those gentlemen. If the object of their meeting was unlawful, why was the meeting not proclaimed? They had banners, and the people had police protection; and if that constituted an unlawful meeting then their meeting was unlawful. They declared they would have the evictions stopped, and they were stopped, and the occupants of the Treasury Bench ought to be very much obliged to them instead of prosecuting them, for they had rendered the path of the Government in Ireland much more easy than if those meetings had not taken place. Their dead chief, Mr. Parnell, had said he would be well satisfied if the Liberal Government did not add to the number of Irish evictions; and what had occurred? Within the past year 2,500 death warrants, as the late Prime Minister called them, had been signed under the *régime* of the Liberal Government. All the gentlemen who went about the country with photographic cameras, and moved and seconded resolutions, were now seized with a dumb devil,

and no one knew their intentions upon this particular subject. He did not pretend to a monopoly of intelligence, a commodity which was entirely absorbed by gentlemen in Government Offices, but he should say that the only portion of Her Majesty's subjects that were terrorised by the proceedings in Castlereagh were the Government. He did think that if he and his friends were to be summoned for breaking the law they ought to have been told that it was an illegal act before it was committed. They were charged with having made a riot at that place. A few boys had made their appearance; but the police, on whom the duty of maintaining order devolved, ran away, and the “riot,” as it was called, subsided in a few minutes. With regard to the Grand Juries, a true bill was returned against Blake by the friends of the landlords, and anyone who was acquainted with what went on in Ireland knew that a true bill would always be returned by a Grand Jury so constituted. He did not wish to detain the House further than to say that if hon. Gentlemen who occupied the Treasury Benches imagined that by pursuing a policy of exasperation against the Irish Democracy they were going to ensure the support of the Irish people, such an idea would be severely discountenanced. God gave the land for the children of men, and not for the protection of the landlords; but he did not believe that they could exact any improvements from a House of landlords, who had power to bring about a state of things that would not be tolerated in any other community. Having delivered this speech in the liberty of his new-found freedom, he wanted to say to hon. Members opposite that he hoped they would never be drawn into a trap, which was Liberalism under the guise of landlord protection. He saw no reason why the Chancellor of the Exchequer should not accept this Amendment, after having made what he judged to be necessary excisions.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER rose in his place, and claimed to move, “That the Question be now put.”

MR. J. REDMOND: No, no; the Debate was finishing when you got up to move the Closure. Nobody else was going to speak at all.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will hon. Members be good enough to leave the Bar of the House in order to enable Members to enter.

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided :—Ayes 227 ; Noes 145.—(Division List, No. 4.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there added."

The House divided :—Ayes 12 ; Noes 351.—(Division List, No. 5.)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER claimed, "That the Main Question, as amended, be now put."

Main Question, as amended, put accordingly, and negatived.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I have now to move that the following Address be presented in answer to the Gracious Speech from the Throne—

COLONEL SAUNDERSON : Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to ask you whether it is not contrary to the immemorial practice of this House for the Mover of the Address not to wear the uniform befitting his rank? If you, Sir, give me an affirmative answer, as I expect will be the case, I shall ask for leave to move the Adjournment of the House for 20 minutes, so as to give the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of arraying himself in the garments suitable to the dignified position which he now fills.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Chancellor of the Exchequer.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I do not think, Sir, that either you or I need take any notice of the manner in which gentlemen opposite think fit to treat the Speech from the Throne. I shall now proceed. [*Laughter*]. When gentlemen opposite assume sufficient gravity to deal with this matter—when gentlemen are ready to listen—I will go on. The Address that I propose in answer to the Speech from the Throne is as follows :—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled, humbly assure Your Majesty that the measures recommended to our consideration shall receive our most careful attention, and we beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."

MR. J. MORLEY : I beg to second the Motion.

Address agreed to *nemine contradicente*.

To be presented by Privy Councillors.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890," relating to the town of Fermoy, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 5.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the town of Belturbet, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 6.]

SUPPLY.

Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Ordered, That the several Estimates presented to this House during the present Session be referred to the Committee of Supply.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

THE WRIT FOR BERWICKSHIRE.

*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) asked why the Motion for issuing a new Writ for the election of a Member for the County of Berwick in the room of Mr. Marjoribanks, who had not only succeeded to a Peerage but had also accepted office under the Crown, had been delayed?

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. T. E. ELLIS, Merionethshire) explained that he had thought it usual to delay until the Writ of Summons to the Upper House should have been issued to Lord Tweedmouth. If, however, hon. Members wished that the Writ should be moved for to-morrow he was quite ready to take that course.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 15th March 1894.

ROLL OF THE LORDS.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had prepared and laid the Roll of their Lordships' House on the Table: The same was ordered to be printed. (No. 5.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

STATEMENT.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBURY): My Lords, I said I would make a short statement as to what the Government would propose on the important subject of holidays. We propose to adjourn to-day until Monday. On Monday I think there is some business to be taken, and then we should propose to adjourn till Easter Monday. In the week beginning on Easter Monday there are some Money Bills to be taken; but otherwise we can promise the House that as far as we are concerned no business of an ordinary character will be taken except those Money Bills. So that anybody who is not interested in those Money Bills can practically take holiday until Monday, 9th April.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE
(PROCEDURE) BILL.—(No. 3.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, this is a Bill which was introduced and passed your Lordships' House last Session, but did not pass into law. The object of the Bill is to carry out certain recommendations of the Council of the Judges in their Report to the Secretary of State. The Bill differs from the Bill of last year in this respect, that it is confined to those matters of procedure with which the Report of the Judges was concerned. Last year's Bill also contained a provision dealing with the officers of the

* Courts in respect of superannuation and otherwise. I have confined the measure, which I ask your Lordships to read a second time this year, strictly to the subject of procedure in the Courts. I think it better that the other matter to which I have just referred should be dealt with by a separate measure.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."
—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD HALSBURY: I think your Lordships will have no doubt that this Bill ought to receive a Second Reading, and probably, ultimately, in some form should pass your Lordships' House. I was not here at the original discussion last year, and there is only one matter to which I should like to call my noble and learned Friend's attention. The swing of the pendulum seems to me to have gone now a little in the contrary direction to that in which it went formerly, and I think the power of limiting appeals is too great. My noble and learned Friend will know what I refer to. It is that part of the Bill which prohibits an appeal in all interlocutory matters except matters affecting the liberty of the subject and infants. It means that practically there shall be no appeal beyond the Court which has originally dealt with the matter and the Judges to whom the application is made unless they give their consent to an appeal. An interlocutory order will include an order of refusal of a new trial. I confess I view with some jealousy having for the first time an enactment of that kind limiting the appellate jurisdiction. It is true that with the leave of the Court such an appeal may be brought. But I see the Lord Chief Justice present, and I hope it is no treason to say that the ablest Judges are sometimes most positive they are right when they are held to have been wrong. It might, therefore, be inconvenient that there should be no appeal upon a pure question of law. My noble and learned Friend on the Wool-sack has taught us that occasionally even the most eminent Judges are wrong; and, therefore, as I have said, I do not like the prohibition of appeals in those cases. Of course, that does not interfere with the Second Reading of the Bill, but I think the point will have to be considered in Committee.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSHELL): No doubt that point will have to be considered. But I would call my noble and learned Friend's attention to this. It is not merely with the leave of the Judge that appeals shall be heard. I think, perhaps, such a provision would be open to objection, but leave to appeal can be obtained if the matter be brought before a Judge of the Court of Appeal. In that case the matter is brought before a new mind, and if it appears to the Judge that the decision in the Court below was right, the veto would be exercised. The provision, therefore, is not quite so prohibitory as my noble and learned Friend seems to think.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

QUARTER SESSIONS (MIDSUMMER) BILL.—(No. 4.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSHELL): My Lords, the object of this Bill is very simple. At the present time, under an Act passed in 1834, the Justices of a county have power to vary the time of the April Quarter Sessions, so as to prevent any conflict or interference with the Spring Assizes. There have been lately some re-arrangements of the time of the Assizes, the result of which is that in some counties, not in many, there may be a conflict between the Summer Assizes and the Summer Quarter Sessions. This Bill is simply to enable the Justices to make the same alteration at the summer period for the Quarter Sessions, in order to prevent conflict with the Assizes, as they can now in the spring. I apprehend there can be no objection to that.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."
—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Moved to resolve—

"That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to: Ordered that a Message be sent to the Commons to communicate this Resolution and to desire their concurrence.

THE ISLAND OF DOMINICA.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

*THE EARL OF STAMFORD moved that a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for the Report of Sir Robert Hamilton upon the administration of the Island of Dominica. He reminded the House that about the middle of last year he had called attention to the lamentable occurrences which had then recently taken place in Dominica. Her Majesty's Government appeared to have thought that those events were really but the external symptoms of a grave and deep-seated malady. It was therefore decided to send out to the Island a Special Commissioner to inquire into its general circumstances, the Island having been in a more or less chronic state of discontent for the last 30 years. Sir Robert Hamilton was appointed Special Commissioner, and went out towards the close of last year. He remained in the Island long enough to make a thoroughly exhaustive investigation. He not only held an open inquiry in the chief town, but he made a tour of the Island, and received complaints and heard statements of grievances in the small villages in the locality. It was very gratifying to observe (he was studying the Dominica newspapers carefully this morning and reading an account of Sir Robert Hamilton's journeyings and his inquiry) the way in which he was received by the people of every creed and complexion and class in the community; and he learned that the visit was no less gratifying to Sir Robert Hamilton himself than to the members of the community in Dominica, who appeared, and very rightly so, to regard him as the special Representative of Her Majesty, sent out on account of the deep interest which she

took in them to inquire into their alleged wrongs. He believed Sir Robert's Report had now reached the Colonial Office, and its publication was awaited with intense interest and anxiety, both in Dominica and in others of the adjacent Islands. It could not be doubted, from Sir Robert Hamilton's well-known ability and from the thoroughness of his investigation, that his Report would prove of great value, and he begged to move for its production.

Moved—

"That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for the Report of Sir Robert Hamilton upon the administration of the Island of Dominica."—(*The Earl of Stamford.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Marquess of Ripon): My Lords, Sir Robert Hamilton's Report has only been received at the Colonial Office during the course of the present week. He carried out the important duty which was entrusted to him with all his usual ability, and the thanks of Her Majesty's Government are due to him for the energy and vigour with which he carried out the work which he was good enough to undertake in the Island of Dominica. But, my Lords, as that Report has only just come into my hands, I am not in a position at this moment to accede to the Motion of my noble Friend. It would be quite unusual, and I am sure your Lordships will see it would not be desirable, that a Report of that importance should be laid upon the Table of either House of Parliament until a reasonable time has been given to the Minister concerned in the matter to study its nature. The Report is full and complete, and I have already had a sufficient opportunity of looking at it to know that it is full of interest to all who care for the welfare of the Island of Dominica. But I hope my noble Friend will be good enough to postpone his Motion for a time, and when I have had an opportunity of studying the Report I have no doubt that later in the Session I shall be able to comply with his request.

THE EARL OF STAMFORD said, he would have great pleasure in postponing the Motion.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 15th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

MILITARY REGULATIONS AT PONTEFRAC T BARRACKS.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that at the 10 o'clock parade held nightly at Pontefract Dépôt all sergeants who are in barracks are forced to attend such parades, although sergeants availing themselves of their privilege to be absent from barracks are exempted; whether there is any Regulation requiring such attendance; and whether such attendance is required in any other dépôt besides Pontefract?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): I am informed that the sergeants who happen to be in Pontefract barracks are required to attend the tattoo parade. It is entirely within the discretion of the officer commanding to require this attendance of sergeants if he thinks there is cause for it. I have no knowledge as to the practice in this respect at other regimental dépôts.

INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPHIC CODE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his Department has issued a Circular, inviting subscriptions to an Official Code Vocabulary for telegrams, which is to be issued by the International Telegraph Office at Berne, at 10s. per copy; whether the use of this Code is to be made compulsory for Code messages, and whether this Rule will deprive merchants and others of the power of sending a secret Code message; how many copies will be purchased by the British Post Office, and at what cost; and whether it can be arranged that the use of the new Code shall be at the discretion of persons wishing to dispatch messages?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The number of copies of the Vocabulary to be purchased by the British Post Office, the price to be paid for them, and the charge to the public will depend on the demand. The Official Vocabulary is intended to facilitate the transmission of secret Code messages; and its use will become compulsory for European Code messages three years after its publication.

PUBLIC WORKS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can explain why it was that, in the year ending 31st March, 1892, out of a Vote of £47,000, for Scotch piers, harbours, &c., only £20,355 4s. 10d. was expended; why, in the year ending 31st March, 1893, out of a Vote of £20,000, for the same purpose, only £4,131 19s. was expended; why, under these circumstances, in the Estimates for the year ending 31st March, 1894, the Estimate for this purpose was so much as £16,000; and whether during the year this sum, or, if not, what portion of it, is likely to be expended?

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The comparison suggested by the hon. Member is not quite accurate. The Vote of £47,000, taken for the year ending 31st March, 1892, embraced all the Highland and Island works, including subsidies for steamers,

whereas the Votes of £20,000 and £16,000 subsequently referred to only relate to the special subhead devoted to piers, harbours, &c. The main reason for the comparatively small expenditure in the first two years as compared with the Estimate taken, was the difficulty of carrying out the manifold stages of the procedure imposed by the Highland and Islands Public Works Act, 1891, and in concluding contracts for the construction of the harbour works. I may add that various harbour works have during the past year been sanctioned by the Treasury, which are in the final stage, and contracts have been entered into for their construction by the County Councils; and that I therefore anticipate that the £16,000 will be almost if not entirely exhausted by the end of the current financial year.

BILLETING AT PONTEFRAC T.

MR. NUSSEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that the licensed victuallers and others at Pontefract, on whom the 3rd King's Dragoon Guards were billeted for some six to eight weeks during the labour dispute in the coal trade in the months of September and October, 1893, have as yet received no compensation in respect to the charges and expenses imposed upon and incurred by them; and whether he will direct that payment shall be made forthwith, and that it shall be at the same rate per man and horse as was made to those on whom cavalry soldiers were billeted during the same period at Wakefield and other Yorkshire towns?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The persons on whom troops were billeted at Pontefract can be paid at once up to the limit laid down in the Army Annual Act; but they claim higher payment, and correspondence is taking place with the Treasury on the question whether any additional payment can be made from public funds.

HORWELL'S ENDOWED SCHOOLS.

MR. OWEN (Cornwall, Launceston): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to a Vestry meeting, held 22nd of February, at St. Stephens-by-Launceston, for the purpose of electing

a representative Governor on the trust of a charity known as Horwell's Endowed Schools, when the Vicar is stated to have put the nomination of a Mr. Thompson to the meeting, and to have declared him duly elected, although only five hands were held up in favour, while 10 hands were held up against his being elected, and that the Vicar refused to receive the nomination of another gentleman, and abruptly closed the meeting at the end of a few minutes; and whether such trustee has been elected according to law; and, if not, will he take the necessary steps to have such election declared invalid, and cause another meeting to be held to elect afresh? I will also ask the right hon. Gentleman if his attention has been called to the report in *The Western Daily Mercury* of a Vestry meeting held 22nd of February at St. Stephen's, Launceston, for the purpose of electing a Governor on the trust of Horwell's Endowed School, wherein the Vicar is said to have put the nomination of a Mr. Thompson without any reasonable interval, and refused to put the nomination of another gentleman, declaring Mr. Thompson elected, although only five hands were held up for him and 10 against; the reverend gentleman is said to have also abruptly closed the meeting without giving those present an opportunity of signing the same, and did not even make an entry, the whole meeting only lasting four minutes; if, on ascertaining the above account to be substantially correct, he will take steps to cancel the said election of a Governor, in order to have one elected in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants; and will he propose to take steps in the matter?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): My attention had not been called to the matter referred to prior to my hon. Friend giving notice of the question. The Local Government Board have communicated with the Vicar of the parish, and he states that Dr. Thompson having been proposed for the office the proposal was seconded and carried, five voting for the motion; and that it is not the case that 10 voted against it. He adds that it was not until after Dr. Thompson had been elected,

and the business of the meeting was at an end, that anything was said as to a wish that some other person should be proposed. Whatever may be the facts, the matter is not one in which the Local Government Board have any jurisdiction. They would not be empowered under any circumstances to declare the election invalid, or to cause another meeting to be held for a further election. As to my hon. Friend's second question on the same subject, I can only state that the Local Government Board are not empowered to take any steps to cancel the election referred to.

SHIPBUILDING CONTRACT WORK.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Estimate in Vote 8, Class III., shipbuilding contract work, exceeded the amount actually expended by £235,106 during the year 1892-93 and by £186,617 during the year 1891-92, and that, during the six years ending 1893, this Estimate has invariably exceeded the amount actually expended, as is likewise the case with Vote 10 for Works, Buildings, and Repairs; whether the large surpluses thus arising through continuous over-estimates are applied to meet deficiencies on other Votes beyond the sums voted by Parliament for those Votes, are occasionally used to ease the Votes of a succeeding year, or are applied to meet expenditure not provided for by Parliament; whether the Admiralty have yet made any reply to the representatives of the Comptroller and Auditor General, that the Admiralty practice, as shown in these Estimates, tends to weaken the control of Parliament over the Appropriation of Grants; and whether steps will be taken to secure that in future the Estimate and the expenditure shall be more evenly balanced?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The hon. Member's question relates to points raised in the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report on the Navy Appropriation Account. These points are under consideration at the Admiralty, and a reply to the Audit Office letter will shortly be sent. The whole subject will then come

in the usual way before the Committee on Public Accounts, who will, if necessary, take evidence upon it and report their conclusions to the House.

WAR OFFICE ACCOUNTS.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the complaints made by the Comptroller and Auditor General and by the Treasury of the inadequacy and the want of explicitness and clearness of the explanations offered by the War Office to account for the great differences between the sums estimated for and the sums actually expended during the year 1892-3; whether he can afford any further explanation of the fact that in this year on the Vote of Guns and Carriages, Repairs, and Conversions, whereas the sum of £41,300 was voted no less than £62,248 11s. 9d. was actually spent, and that under the head of Appropriations in Aid the sales of old stores, estimated to produce £105,000, only produced £55,136 11s. 7d., in both which cases the inadequacy of the explanation has been specially noted by the Treasury; and whether, in future, steps will be taken to secure that the estimate and the expenditure shall be more evenly balanced?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am aware of the references made by the Comptroller and Auditor General to these two cases. As attention has thus been specially called to them, they will necessarily be examined and considered by the Accounts Committee, and the War Department will be prepared to give to that Committee all the explanations required. That is the regular process, which it is not desirable to anticipate.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in the meantime, any steps will be taken to meet the suggestions and requirements of the Auditor and Comptroller General?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No doubt we will meet the views of the Comptroller and Auditor General as far as possible.

LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS AT COAST-GUARD STATIONS.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury

Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth

whether he can explain how it is that the claim of £7,815 2s. 2d. for storing life-saving apparatus at coastguard stations, made by the Admiralty against the Board of Trade in 1891 and submitted to the Treasury, has not yet been settled?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Mercantile Marine Fund, which is administered by the Board of Trade, has claims against the Admiralty and other Departments for services rendered to them. The Admiralty and other Departments have claims against the Mercantile Marine Fund, of which that of £7,815 2s. 2d. for storing life-saving apparatus is one. These claims may probably, so far as they will go, be set against one another. But no precise adjustment can be made until the time comes for a revision of the conditions on which the Grant in Aid of the Mercantile Marine Fund is based. These conditions are under discussion between the Board of Trade and the Treasury.

CANADIAN CATTLE TRADE.

SIR J. KINLOCH (Perth, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a remonstrance has been received from the Dominion Government of Canada against the continuance of the Order for slaughtering Canadian cattle on landing in the United Kingdom; whether the Minister of Agriculture in Canada has furnished all possible evidence of the non-existence of contagious pleuro-pneumonia in the Dominion; whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies has made any representation to the President of the Board of Agriculture respecting the strong feeling existing in the Colony against scheduling Canadian cattle; and whether the Papers on the subject will be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): A very full and voluminous Report has been received, and is now under consideration. The question as to giving Papers should be addressed to the Board of Agriculture.

MATLOCK BRITISH SCHOOL.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester): In the absence of my hon. Colleague (Mr. Pictou), I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education on what date Her Majesty's Inspector first reported adversely on the structural condition of the British School, Matlock, and how often the attention of the managers has been called to the matter; whether the managers have yet taken any steps to remedy the defects complained of; whether it is a fact that this school has no playground, and that the sanitary arrangements are defective; whether complaints about the state of the school have been sent to him by parents of the children attending it; and whether, seeing that the annual inspection is just over, he will now peremptorily decline further recognition to the school?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): Her Majesty's Inspector reported adversely on this school after the inspection in February, 1892, and the attention of the managers was called to his Report in March. Plans for alterations were submitted by the managers in May and a lengthy correspondence followed. During the summer of 1892 the managers were in negotiation for additional site, and they submitted fresh plans in September which, after further protracted correspondence, were finally approved in February, 1893. Her Majesty's Inspector reported to the Department in August last that nothing had been done towards carrying out the alterations, and the managers were subsequently warned that the school in its present condition could not continue to be recognised indefinitely. The school has no playground, and is in parts damp and insufficiently lighted and ventilated. Complaints have been received from a parent of children attending it that it is cold and draughty. The last Annual Report has just been received, and is now under consideration. It appears from it that no alterations have yet been made.

LISCARD, CHESHIRE, SCHOOL.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD: On behalf of my hon. Colleague, I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been

called to the report in *The Birkenhead News* of 3rd March of a statement made by the Rev. O. T. L. Crossley at a public meeting held at Liscard, Cheshire, on the 2nd March, from which it appears that Mr. Crossley offered a site for a school in the churchyard at Liscard, which site was approved by the Department; whether Mr. Crossley's statement as to the approval of the site is correct; and, if so, whether the site in question satisfied the Rules of the Department as to playground, &c.; and whether the Department have power to sanction the alienation of land dedicated to another public purpose?

MR. ACLAND: I have not seen the report to which the hon. Member refers. Mr. Crossley, last year, submitted a site for a new school at Liscard behind his church. His proposal was sanctioned by the Chancellor of the Diocese. No interments had ever taken place in the portion of the site proposed for the school, and none in any part of the churchyard for several years. The architect of the Department reported that the site was sufficient for a school of about 400 children, and Her Majesty's Inspector did not see any objection to it. Mr. Crossley was therefore informed that the site could be accepted. The question as to alienation does not concern the Department.

LIMERICK POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH STAFFS.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the revision in the Limerick postal and telegraph staffs which has been pending for the past two years has yet been sanctioned; if the Return of Duties and the Revised Scheme for the working of the Limerick Post Office were submitted in October last; and if he will state what is the cause of the delay, and when the revision is likely to be settled?

*MR. A. MORLEY: The hon. Member is mistaken in supposing that any revision of these staffs has been pending for the last two years. A revision of the postal side of the Office—involving a few minor alterations—has, however, recently been under consideration, and is now before the Treasury, and it is hoped that it will shortly be carried out. Inquiries which have recently been made respecting the

telegraph work appear to indicate that there is waste of force in certain duties ; and I am having this question carefully investigated.

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS RETURN.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will during the present Session give a Return of all Public Elementary Schools similar to the Return given in August, 1890, with such alterations as may be necessary in consequence of the fee grant ?

MR. ACLAND : A Return including this information is in course of preparation for the year ended 31st August, 1893. As it is of a somewhat elaborate character, it will probably not be ready for issue till the Session is well advanced.

LOCH FYNE HERRING FISHERY.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyllshire) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the extreme diversity of opinion amongst fishermen in and about Loch Fyne upon the subject of the close time for herrings ; whether he is aware that the close time which is suitable for one locality is not suitable for others ; and whether he will instruct the Fishery Board to take evidence on the spot with the view of making some alteration in the present Rules ?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : I am fully aware that there is a considerable difference of opinion as to a close-time for herring-fishing on the West Coast. In respect to Loch Fyne, I am informed by the Fishery Board that the voluntary close-time extends from 15th March till 1st June, and was established in 1888 by the Argyll and Bute Fishermen's Association. This close-time was, up to this year, strongly supported by all sections of this Association. Quite recently the southern section of the Association petitioned against it, and the Board have informed the various sections that they desire to leave the question of close-time in the hands of the fishermen themselves. I may add that an inquiry was made by the Fishery Board in 1892, which disclosed a very considerable divergence of opinion amongst the fishermen, fish-

curers, and others interested in regard to the question of establishing a close-time for herrings. In all the circumstances, I do not propose to institute any further inquiry at present.

DUNDALK GAOL.

DR. KENNY (Dublin, College Green) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the medical officer of Dundalk Gaol, in his quarterly Report in January, 1894, drew attention to the case of a prisoner in said gaol named Sheridan, and suggested that the Prisons Board (Ireland) should issue a Rule that prisoners under medical treatment should not be put to hard labour till taken off the sick list by the medical officer of the prison in which they are confined ; and whether the Prisons Board refused to issue such a Rule ; and, if so, whether he will direct the Prisons Board to alter their decision, and issue a Rule to prevent the recurrence of the grievance complained of ? I will further ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can state how many inquiries on oath and how many inquiries not on oath took place in Dundalk Gaol, or in reference thereto, from 1st January, 1886, to the date of the appointment of the present Governor ; how many similar inquiries have taken place from the date of the appointment of the present Governor of said gaol to 1st January, 1894 ; and how many warders are still attached to Dundalk Gaol who were there at the time of the appointment of the present Governor ? And, in addition, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that a prisoner named Sheridan, confined in Dundalk Gaol, being reported seriously ill on the night of 8th December, 1893, was visited in his cell at 10.30 p.m. that night by Dr. Flood, who was doing duty for the medical officer of the gaol owing to the illness of the latter ; that Dr. Flood made a note in the medical officer's journal that Sheridan was suffering from a bronchial attack and had a temperature as high as 103.2 degrees, and ordered him medicine and nourishment and to be poulticed, &c. ; that, on visiting Sheridan at 8.30 a.m. on 9th December, he found him out of bed and picking oakum, his tasked labour, with a poultice on his back ; whether Sheridan subsequently developed acute pneumonia, which nearly

carried him off; whether he can state by whose direction a prisoner under medical treatment, and as ill as above indicated, was ordered out of bed and sent to his ordinary hard labour under the conditions described; whether any Rule exists in Irish prisons forbidding prisoners under medical treatment being put to hard or any labour till certified as fit by the medical officer; and whether, if there be no such Rule, he will issue such explicit instructions as will in future effectually prevent the recurrence of such inhumanity as was practised in Sheridan's case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): As regards these questions, I have to say that I have received from the General Prisons Board a Report dealing with the action of the prison officials in the case. But with a view to elicit the entire facts, I propose to direct a sworn inquiry to be made into the matter by the Prisons Board.

DR. KENNY: I beg to thank the right hon. Gentleman for his answer.

LAND PURCHASE IN KILKENNY COUNTY.

MR. M'DERMOTT (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that a number of tenants of Mr. Carbery's and Lady Saurin, in the County Kilkenny, signed agreements for the purchase of their holdings about four years ago; and whether he can state the reason why the purchase money has not yet been advanced by the Land Commission?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed by the Land Commissioners that on the 8th October, 1891, 27 agreements were lodged on behalf of tenants on this estate for advances under the provisions of the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1888. Applications had at that time, however, been received largely in excess of the grant of £10,000,000 available under the Acts mentioned, and at the present date funds have not yet been released for the particular applications referred to, and consequently they cannot, so I am informed, yet be finally ruled on. It is possible, however, that funds may soon be available.

EXPLOSIONS IN COAL MINES.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with respect to the Commission to inquire into Explosions in Coal Mines from Coaldust, which has been sitting for some time, what is the present position of the inquiry; and whether the House will soon be in possession of the Report of the Commission?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): At the conclusion of the evidence the Commission adjourned, in order to await the result of certain experiments. These experiments are now finished, and I am informed by the Chairman that they will now proceed to the immediate consideration of the Report, which he hopes will be presented not later than the end of June next.

THE SMALLS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether there is any intention of at once increasing the power of the light on The Smalls, as has been so often urged by Masters of the Mercantile Marine?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I am informed by the Trinity House that 18 months ago the power of the light at The Smalls was increased more than 20 per cent., and that there is no necessity for making a further increase.

NAVAL WARLIKE STORES.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have yet accepted responsibility in respect of the test and proof of guns and the inspection of warlike stores for the Naval Service, or whether this question, as to which the Committee on Public Accounts last year reported that it had made no advance since 1892, still remains unsettled?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The question has been referred for consideration to the Naval Warlike Stores Committee, who have not yet reported upon it.

MADAGASCAR.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the newly appointed Consul of the United States for Madagascar has abstained from applying for the *exequatur* through the medium of the French Resident General, and has referred back to his Government for further instructions; and whether it would be possible for Her Majesty's Government to cause inquiry to be made on the spot into the existing position of affairs in Madagascar, and to place themselves in communication with the Government of the United States with a view to joint action in respect to Madagascar, in which the two Powers have equal commercial and other interests?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): It is understood that the United States Consul has not yet applied for an *exequatur*, but Her Majesty's Government have no knowledge of his communications with his Government. The existing position of affairs is so well known that a local inquiry is superfluous. In view of the position of France as the protecting Power, Her Majesty's Government cannot adopt the suggestion in the second paragraph of the question.

VOLUNTEER NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS' DECORATION.

MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state what is the reason for the delay in the issue of the decoration to Volunteer non-commissioned officers; and whether he can give any definite information as to the date when the same will be ready for distribution?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Much consideration has been given to the question of the conditions and character of this decoration, and I hope to state to-morrow the conclusions at which I have arrived.

KIRKDALE GAOL, LIVERPOOL.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in offering for sale the site of the closed Kirkdale Gaol, the Government

reserve any portion of the site as an open air space, or make any conditions as to the purposes to which the site is to be put; and whether the Government have definitely abandoned all idea of building military barracks on the site?

MR. ASQUITH: No portion of the site is reserved for any purpose, and there are no conditions as to the purposes to which the site is to be put, and I am informed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War that he is not aware of any intention of erecting barracks on the site.

HAULBOWLINE DOCKYARD.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is proposed to carry out the contemplated overhaul of the hull and machinery of H.M.S. *Warspite*, at Haulbowline Dockyard?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Any necessary work that can be conveniently and economically carried out at Haulbowline will be taken in hand there.

INDIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any, and what, action has been taken, on the recommendations of the Indian Public Service Commission of 1886, regarding the special departments of the Indian Administration, referred to by Lord Cross in the last paragraph (37) of his Despatch (No. Public 104), dated London, 12th September, 1889; whether the Local Governments and the Government of India have forwarded to the Secretary of State their views on the suggestions of the Commission regarding these special departments as desired by Lord Cross in the above paragraph of his Despatch; and what orders have been passed by the Secretary of State thereon?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): It is impossible to give, within the limit of an answer, in this House a statement of the steps which have been taken with regard to the matters referred to in the hon. Member's question. The subject is a large and complicated one, and has been dealt with in a lengthy Correspondence which is not yet

complete. When the Correspondence is complete there will be no objection to laying it on the Table of the House if the hon. Member will move for it.

BECHUANALAND CONCESSIONS COMMISSION.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for West Cavan, I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the Bechuanaland Concessions Commission sat at Gaberones on 10th May, 1893, and heard evidence, the hearings occupying about a week; whether the Commission have given their decision on any of the cases then heard; if not, what is the reason for the delay; and whether he can say when the Report or decision of the Commission may be expected?

MR. S. BUXTON: The final Report and connected documents of the Bechuanaland Concessions Commission were received at the Colonial Office in Decemberlast. They form a very bulky document, which requires very careful consideration. The pressure of work in the South African Department has been so great that it has been, as yet, quite impossible to deal with the Report.

STEAM TRAWLERS IN THE MORAY FIRTH.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that six steam trawlers were seen at work about eight miles N.N.E. from Port Knockie on Sunday the 4th of March; whether he will state what arrangements are made to prevent and punish such offences against the bye-laws excluding trawlers from the Moray Firth; and whether anchorage is obtainable at Craigenroan for a gunboat when employed for the protection of the fisheries in this locality?

*SIR G. TREVELYAN: On inquiry I am informed by the Fishery Board that on the 9th instant they received a communication from the Moray Firth Fisheries Association which they at once sent to the Commander of H.M.S. *Jackal*, who reported to the effect that inquiries had been made regarding the alleged trawling, but that there were apparently no grounds for the complaints, the vessels probably being steam liners

and vessels on passage. The Moray Firth is patrolled by the *Jackal*, which is specially set apart for the superintendence of the fisheries in that area and its protection against the operation of trawlers. In addition to this, if the letters and numbers of any trawler detected working in the proscribed waters are intimated to the Board, the case is reported to the Procurator Fiscal. There is anchorage off Kingston, three miles west of Craigenroan, but it is open and unsafe, with wind from east to north to north-west. That is the opinion of the Fishery Board, and it is corroborated by the Admiralty.

NICKEL STEEL PLATES IN NAVAL CONSTRUCTION.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the results of recent trials of armour plates by the United States Government at Annapolis and at India Head prove the great superiority in resistance of plates constructed of nickel steel as compared with compound plates and plates constructed by the Harvey process without nickel; whether he is aware that the German Government have adopted nickel steel plates for vessels now in course of building; whether Her Majesty's Government have nevertheless adopted the cheaper Harveyed plates for protected vessels now being constructed for Her Majesty's Navy; whether any trials of nickel plates as against Harveyed and other plates have recently been made in this country; and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government will lay upon the Table a Report showing the nature and result of such trials; and whether Her Majesty's Government have received any authentic account of the recent trials of various kinds of plates in the United States which they can make public?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The hon. Gentleman will find the general answer to his questions in the Explanatory Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, which will, I trust, be in the hands of Members to-morrow. The Admiralty note the results of armour plate trials made abroad, but rely mainly on the results of our own trials of armour manufactured under our own officers' inspection. Doubtless the German Government pursues a corresponding policy.

Cheapness has not been the reason for the conclusions at which we have arrived as the result of a long series of trials. It would not be possible to publish either official Reports of our trials, or special information as to trials abroad.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to this matter on the Estimates.

FAMINE IN THE ARRAN ISLANDS.

MR. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the inhabitants of the Arran Islands are in a famine-stricken condition, owing to the failure of their crops last season, and the tempestuous winter weather, which prevented them from pursuing their fishing avocations; whether they are destitute of the means of tilling their lands; and what steps, if any, are being taken to save them from death by starvation, and to supply them with seed potatoes for their holdings?

MR. J. MORLEY: Representations have been made to me regarding the condition of the people on these islands, and on their receipt I at once directed inquiry to be made, and special attention has since been given to the matter. The Local Government Board Inspector, who has recently spent several days on the island, has made careful inquiry into the condition of the people, and as to the sufficiency of existing relief arrangements; and the relieving officer, who is resident on the principal island, has at his disposal the means of affording outdoor relief in cases of necessity, and has been fully instructed by the Board's Inspector as to his duties and responsibilities. The prolonged gales have, no doubt, seriously inconvenienced, and to some extent impoverished, the islanders; but it is not correct to say that they are starving, or that any general destitution exists; and, as I have pointed out, the Local Government Board have adopted all necessary precautions for dealing with any unexpected emergency. Application has been made by the parish priest for a quantity of seed potatoes to be supplied to the islanders as a free gift; but with this application it is not, I regret, possible to comply, as there are no funds available for the purpose, and the Congested Districts Board are only empowered to provide seed for cash payment.

Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth

ALLEGED ASSAULT BY AN OFFICER AT STONEHOUSE.

The following question appeared on the Paper:—

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that a serious assault and breach of discipline were committed by Lieutenant Colonel Coffin, at the Royal Marine Barracks, Stonehouse, on the 28th ultimo, under the following circumstances—namely, that this officer whilst inspecting men under orders to embark, and having occasion to find fault with one of them, called the Company Sergeant, Colour Sergeant Baker, before him and ordered him to remove the man from the ranks, saying to the Sergeant “Get out of my way,” “Get out of my way,” “Get away, d—n you,” at the same time stepping forward and pushing the Colour Sergeant with such violence as to cause him to stagger several paces backwards, and his cap to fall from his head; whether he is aware that the incident was witnessed by the following officers—namely, Captain Gordon, Lieutenants Graham, Pearce, and Barker, and by upwards of 100 non-commissioned officers and men, and some civilians; whether he is aware that Colour Sergeant Baker has been upwards of 15 years a non-commissioned officer, and during that time has borne an unimpeachable character, and is now within two months of completing his 21 years' service; and what steps the Admiralty purpose taking to protect him and others from such conduct?

As the question was not put in due course,

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said: I should like to know whether this question, which contains a serious imputation upon an officer, is to be allowed to pass over without notice being given as to when it will be answered? Such questions as these ought to be answered directly they appear on the Paper.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is usual to allow questions to be postponed if the Minister wishes it.

MR. KEARLEY: As reference has been made to me, I should explain in justice to myself that I understand communications are passing between the Admiralty and the Marine Authorities which will, I hope, put this matter in

a position satisfactory to those who are aggrieved.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I rise to Order. I do not think any statement of that sort should be made.

MR. BARTLEY: When is the question to be answered?

[No reply was given.]

WORKING HOURS IN GOVERNMENT NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether it is the intention of the Admiralty to introduce a working week of 48 hours into the Naval Establishments at the commencement of the new financial year?

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): Will the hon. Gentleman also answer my question to the same effect?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (MR. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): I shall be much obliged if my hon. Friend and also the right hon. Member for Cambridge University will postpone their questions.

SIR J. GORST: How long is this question to be postponed? I have been putting it ever since March last. I should like to have some definite idea when it will be replied to.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I am unable to name any definite time. The right hon. Gentleman must use his discretion as to when he will repeat the question.

SIR J. GORST: It will be my duty on the Estimates to call the attention of the House to the dilatory proceedings of the Government on this matter.

FERMOY UNION ACCOUNTS.

MR. W. KENNY: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, as President of the Local Government Board in Ireland, his attention has been called to the Report of Mr. Ellis, the Auditor of the Board, in regard to the accounts of the Fermoy Union, in which it is stated that he could not speak too strongly of the abuses that exist in connection with outdoor relief; that in 1881-2 the expenditure under this head was £311, whilst in the year 1892-3 it was £1,646, or about one-sixth of the entire resources of the Union; and that neither the

Guardians nor the relieving officers fairly understood the legal restrictions on the administration of this form of relief, and in many cases were deliberately careless; whether the action of the Guardians in the Fermoy Union is typical of what prevails over much of the South and West of Ireland; whether, owing to this and other forms of maladministration, many of the Poor Law Unions throughout Ireland are in a state of financial embarrassment; and if he proposes to take any steps to secure the due administration of the Poor Law?

MR. T. M. HEALY: Before that question is answered I wish to know, Sir—I am not aware if questions are submitted to you in the absence of Mr. Speaker—whether it is in Order in a question of this nature to introduce such statements as are contained in the second and third paragraphs, and is it not usual for the Clerks at the Table to insist on the questions being confined to matters of fact?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: These paragraphs appear by inadvertence, and I directed them to be struck out when my attention was called to them. I may add that during the last few days there has been very great pressure on the Clerks.

MR. J. MORLEY: In his recent Report on the audit of the Fermoy Union accounts the Auditor did, I am told, refer to the administration of outdoor relief in the Union in the terms quoted in the question. The action of the Fermoy Guardians is not, as asserted by the hon. Gentleman, "typical of what prevails" over much of the South and West of Ireland. The Local Government Board are aware of a few Unions which are at present more or less financially embarrassed; but this arises not so much from extravagance in the giving of outdoor relief as from the action of the Guardians in failing to strike adequate rates and to punctually collect the same when struck. The Fermoy Guardians have instructed their relieving officers to prepare and lay before them at their next meeting a Return of all cases of outdoor relief, with full particulars and observations in respect of each case, with a view to a thorough revision taking place.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Is it not the fact that the accounts for all Irish Poor Law Unions are subjected to

minute scrutiny at the hands of the Government Auditors every year, and have any Reports been made by these officials that such abuses as are indicated in the question exist, or that the Guardians are ignorant of their duties?

MR. J. MORLEY: What my hon. Friend implies in his question is quite true. The accounts are annually audited by an Auditor appointed by the Local Government Board; and as to the implication in the last paragraph of the question of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, I am able to say that the statement that the Poor Law is not fairly and duly administered is entirely inconsistent with the facts.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Has the right hon. Gentleman any reason to believe that all the Poor Law Unions in England are free from financial embarrassment?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer that.

MR. W. KENNY: How many other Poor Law Unions in Ireland are in this state?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot say how many, but my Report is that it is very few.

CRIME IN COUNTY CLARE.

MR. W. KENNY: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of cases of crime reported by the police to the Judge of Assize in County Clare at the recent Spring Assizes, held at Ennis, the number of persons made amenable thereat, and the result of the trials of the said persons; and the number of Clare prisoners tried at the Winter Assizes, held at Cork, and the results of the trials of the said persons under the change of venue involved in the Winter Assize Act?

MR. J. MORLEY: The total number of cases reported by the police to the Judge at the last Spring Assizes for Clare was 118, which included all cases that occurred in the county since the Summer Assizes of 1893. The number of bills found by the Grand Jury was seven, resulting in three pleas of guilty, one conviction, and three disagreements of juries. The number of persons returned for trial from Clare to the Winter Assizes, held at Cork, was 30, resulting

in seven convictions, eight pleas of guilty, five acquittals, and seven disagreements of juries. In the remaining three cases a *nolle prosequi* was entered in one, and in two the defendants were discharged on their own recognizances to come up for trial when called upon. I may observe that Mr. Justice O'Brien, in his remarks at the Clare Spring Assizes regarding the number of cases in which persons were made amenable, fell into the blunder of ignoring the Winter Assizes. The list of cases furnished to the Judge covered the period from the Summer Assizes, 1893, to Spring Assizes, 1894—in all 118 cases. Seven persons had been returned for trial to the Spring Assizes, with the results already stated by me; but there were 11 other Clare cases for trial at the Cork Winter Assizes, in which there were seven convictions, so that, instead of there being only four cases in which persons were made amenable—that is to say, one conviction and three pleas of guilty—there were in the period referred to by the Judge 15 cases in all sent for trial and eight convictions.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Can the right hon. Gentleman tell me how it is that Mr. Justice O'Brien always goes the Munster Assizes; also has his attention been called to the fact that this Judge's observations at the Spring Assizes in County Clare were exactly the same as in the Charge which he made at Cork Assizes in 1886, when a Home Rule Government was in power, including the statement that "the waters had not yet subsided," and other literary gems of that description? Further, has his attention been called to the strong censure passed by Justice Gibson on his learned brother with regard to his sentences?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am unable to say how it happens that Mr. Justice O'Brien always goes the Munster Circuit, the arrangements made being irrespective of any action of the Executive Government. I confess I read this learned Judge's Charge with some amazement, because the impression which the Judge, travelling, I think, entirely out of his province, attempts to convey on the relative state of order in Clare is entirely unsupported by the opinion of the Local Police Authorities, and I prefer to believe the Local Police Authorities.

Mr. Sexton

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): In how many of the 118 cases reported in County Clare were convictions obtained from Clare juries?

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not carry all the figures in my head.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Was there one case?

[No answer was given.]

MR. SEXTON: As it is suggested from the Bench and otherwise that the state of things could be improved by resort to the machinery of coercion, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not the fact that, not only in Clare but throughout Ireland during the period of the Crimes Act of 1887, the proportion of persons made amenable to the total number of crimes committed was always extremely minute?

MR. J. MORLEY: Yes, speaking more particularly in regard to Clare, and unless my recollection deceives me—and I do not think it does—the same applies to Ireland generally, the proportion of persons made amenable for crimes committed in Clare during the operation of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Amendment) Act was not largely in excess of those which they now succeed in obtaining.

DR. KENNY: Do not the statistics of crime in Clare compare favourably with those when the Coercion Act was in operation?

MR. W. KENNY: Were not the observations of Mr. Justice O'Brien based on the Returns of the police furnished at the Assizes?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot undertake to say what was the precise foundation on which the learned Judge based his observations.

THE ARMY HOSPITAL CORPS.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the drivers and horses allotted to the transport of the Army Hospital Corps are supplied by the Army Service Corps; whether the men and horses of the Army Service Corps, belonging as they do to the combatant branch, will be under the protection of the Geneva Convention in time of war; or whether they will be liable to be shot or captured while in charge of, or attached to, the ambulance waggons; and whether the

practice of supplying the ambulance transport from a combatant corps prevails in any Army other than our own?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The transport needed for medical services in time of war would be supplied from the mounted companies of the Army Service Corps. Men so employed, when wearing the brassard, would be under the protection of the Geneva Convention. I am informed that in Austria, France, Germany, and Russia ambulance transport is provided from combatant corps.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER was understood to ask, further, whether in France, Germany, and Austria these men were not deemed to be under the protection of the Geneva Convention, and whether the same did not apply to the ambulance drivers permanently attached to the Ambulance Corps?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN asked for notice.

SCOTTISH LEGISLATION.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government will introduce legislation with regard to Scottish Fisheries during the present Session?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Government intend to press the Local Government Bill for Scotland to completion before they undertake any fresh legislation of importance.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Would it be possible to distribute copies of the Local Government Bill before Easter, so that we may consult our constituents in relation thereto?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: It has been arranged that no Government Bills shall be introduced before Easter.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): Does that apply to the amendments to the Crofters Act?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I hope it will be possible at the latter part of the Session to get through the short Bill required to complete the Crofters Act.

MR. DALZIEL: May I ask whether, in the event of representations being made that no serious opposition will be offered to the introduction of the Scotch Local Government Bill before Easter, the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to consider

the possibility of moving the Adjournment one night at 10 o'clock to enable a statement to be made?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have given a pledge that the business up to Easter shall be confined to financial matters, and I understand that there is an objection to the introduction of Government Bills before that time.

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's, &c.): Are we to understand from the somewhat ambiguous reply of the Secretary for Scotland that, in the event of satisfactory progress being made with the Local Government Bill, the Government propose to bring in a Bill dealing with the Scotch fisheries?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I should certainly give preference to the Crofters Amendment Bill.

INDIAN IMPORT DUTY.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if the decision to exempt British cotton goods from the Import Duty imposed upon most other articles was arrived at by the Government of India, or whether the exemption was by order of the Secretary of State; and upon what principle the Government of India is prohibited from imposing a duty of 5 per cent. upon certain British goods for Revenue purposes, while the Home Government, for the same object, imposes a duty of nearly 50 per cent. upon Indian tea?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The Secretary of State declined to sanction the proposal of the Government of India to include cotton goods among those on which a duty was to be imposed. He did so on the ground that a duty on such goods in the shape in which it was proposed by the Government of India would operate as a Protective Duty, and that, in view of the Resolutions passed by the House of Commons on the subject in 1877 and 1879, such a duty ought not to be imposed unless a more urgent financial necessity were shown than that which the Government of India had laid before him. I may add that the Tea Duty is a Revenue Duty charged upon all tea consumed. With respect to articles on which, when imported from abroad, a Customs Duty is levied, a countervailing Excise Duty is levied on the same

articles, if produced or manufactured in this country.

MR. WHITELEY (Stockport): May I ask whether the cotton trade in India since the abolition of duties on imported cotton goods has not largely increased, and would not the direct effect of the re-imposition of the duties be to further stimulate the manufacturing them at the expense of the already suffering and depressed home industry?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I answered that question the other night, when I gave the figures showing the enormous progress made in the internal cotton trade of India.

SIR D. MACFARLANE: Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer, seeing that the Home Government has decided to fetter the hands of the Government of India in the matter of an essential duty in order to avoid a deficit, be prepared in the Budget to provide for such deficit?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think the hon. Member will hardly expect me to answer such a question offhand.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT: PAROCHIAL OFFICIALS.

MR. TAYLOR (Norfolk, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether in this present year Overseers will have to be nominated and surveyors to be elected at the parish meetings which ought to be held on the 25th of March (or within 14 days thereof), or will the present officials continue to hold office until November next, in like manner as the Guardians?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): Overseers and surveyors of highways are not continued in office by the Local Government Act, and it will be necessary in the present year that these officers should be appointed at the same time and in the same manner as if the Act had not passed.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES AT YOUGHAL.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Irish Privy Council on the 7th instant, upholding the objection of Sir Joseph Neale M'Kenna

Mr. Dalziel

to the erection of a labourer's cottage on his property by the Youghal (County Cork) Board of Guardians; whether he is aware that in the adjoining Union of Middleton more than one-third of the original scheme was nullified owing to similar successful action on the part of landowners, thus depriving 103 labourers of cottages in this Union alone; and whether, in view of the fact that the working of the Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Acts is seriously crippled by the extensive use made of the power to appeal under the present system, he will take steps to enable Boards of Guardians duly to carry out the duties entrusted to them under these Acts?

MR. J. MORLEY: The fact is as stated in the first paragraph. As regards the Middleton Union, the number of cottages included in the Guardians' scheme was 303, and the number sanctioned by the Local Government Board was 208; Petitions were lodged against 17 of these, and the Privy Council disallowed the objections as to nine cottages, with the result that 200 of the 208 cottages previously approved by the Board were finally authorised. The Board inform me that they do not think that the working of the Labourers' Act is seriously crippled by the use made of the power of appeal.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the vast majority of cases the Privy Council have paid no attention to the representations of Boards of Guardians?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot say I am aware of it.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AS INSPECTORS.

MR. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been drawn to the dissatisfaction existing among teachers in public elementary schools in England and Wales with the recent appointment of Mr. L. J. Roberts, B.A., as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools; and whether he has ascertained that there were no Sub-Inspectors already engaged in the work of the inspection of schools, or teachers employed in the work of instruction of schools, who being certificated teachers and possessed of the

requisite experience might have received the appointment in question?

MR. GROVE (West Ham, N.): May I ask whether it has been the custom to nominate Inspectors from the ranks of school teachers; whether there is any objection to such nominations; and whether the last Vice President did not approve a scheme for making such nominations?

MR. ACLAND: No previous Government has made any such appointment as those indicated in the question, with one exception, when a distinguished University man, who was for a short time a certificated teacher, became ultimately an Inspector. I have received several letters expressing dissatisfaction on this subject, and have seen some letters written to others. I observe that these letters have, almost without exception, ignored the fact that almost for the first time in the history of the Department, as far as I am aware, two Sub-Inspectors who had been certificated teachers have been made Inspectors since I became Vice President out of four appointments made. The answer to the second part of the question is in the negative, because I do not take the view that all Inspectors without exception should necessarily have been certificated teachers. I think that complete exclusiveness in any part of our educational system at a time when by degrees the various grades of education in the country are becoming more effectively united into a common whole would be a misfortune. I am fully satisfied with the choice that has been made in the case of Mr. Roberts, who is now serving under the Chief Inspector for Wales.

MULLINGAR WATER SUPPLY.

DR. KENNY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the source from which is derived the water supply for the military barracks, Mullingar; whether the supply is by contract; if so, who are the contractors; what is the rate per 1,000 gallons; and when does the contract terminate?

***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** The water supply for the barracks at Mullingar comes from the Convent of the Annunciation, Mullingar, under a contract with the Bishop of the diocese and others. It is not usual to disclose contract prices in such cases. The fixed

term of the contract expires in the present month; but the arrangement continues until six months' notice on either side is given.

DR. KENNY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the existence of this contract prevents the town of Mullingar accepting an adequate water supply, which has been offered at the rate of 4d. per 1,000 gallons?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have no knowledge of that. If the hon. Member will inform me of the circumstances I will inquire into the matter.

THE BRAZILIAN REVOLUTION.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information as to progress of the civil war in Brazil, and especially as to the reported surrender of Admiral da Gama?

*SIR E. GREY: The Senior Naval Officer at Rio, telegraphing on the 14th instant, states that the Portuguese commanding naval officer has received Admiral Saldhana da Gama and many of his officers and men on board his vessel. Her Majesty's Government have not yet received any further details relating to the surrender of the insurgent forces in Rio Bay.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Her Majesty's Minister at Rio de Janeiro has confirmed the report of the cessation of the civil war in Brazil, and in such case if Her Majesty's Government will render all assistance possible to British traders to recoup the disastrous losses of the past six months of siege, and use its influence with the Brazilian Government to devote itself to the development of the riches of the country and the opening up of fresh channels for International trade?

*SIR E. GREY: The question of how to deal with claims of British subjects for losses arising out of the recent disturbances in Brazil is now being considered in consultation with the Law Officers of the Crown. The Government of Brazil cannot be asked to take advice from outside as to the development of their own country, but Her Majesty's Government are anxious to use every

means in their power to promote trade with Brazil as soon as the political state of the country admits of it.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): May I ask whether the Government have received any complaints from British residents as to the neglect of their interests; and, if so, is there any foundation for those complaints?

MR. HANBURY: Is it true that Admiral da Gama has taken refuge on one of Her Majesty's ships?

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Will the Government use its influence to obtain element treatment for the officers and men of the Brazilian Navy who have surrendered?

*SIR E. GREY: I can only say, in answer to the last question, that Her Majesty's Government has been most careful to abstain from any interference whatever in what was a purely internal matter, and I cannot promise that they will interfere in the final settlement of the dispute. It is true that in disturbances of this kind persons not directly concerned must suffer. British trade is considerable, and it has suffered, and that has naturally given rise to many complaints which we have received; but I am sure that Her Majesty's Minister and the naval officers, who had a most difficult task to perform, have discharged their duties well, and done the utmost possible under the circumstances. With regard to Admiral da Gama, our latest information is that he is on board a Portuguese vessel, not a British ship.

THE TREATMENT OF INEBRIATES.

MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce, at an early date, a Bill to carry out the Report from the Departmental Committee on the treatment of inebriates?

MR. ASQUITH: Instructions have been given to the Parliamentary draftsman to prepare a Bill for introduction to Parliament to carry out the recommendations of the Report of the Departmental Committee, and my hon. Friend the Under Secretary hopes to introduce the Bill at an early date.

MR. LEES KNOWLES: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for

Foreign Affairs if he will supply, by Return or otherwise, complete information as to the treatment of habitual inebriates in the various cantons of Switzerland?

SIR E. GREY: A Report has just been received, and will be published in the Miscellaneous Series of Reports.

ARTILLERY MAJORS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that in 1882 a Warrant was issued promising that majors of Artillery who served seven years as battery commanders would be made brevet lieutenant colonels, that in consequence of this Warrant a considerable number of officers were induced to remain in the Royal Artillery, and can he explain why this Rule has been suddenly abrogated, and if any complaints or remonstrances on this head have been addressed to the late or present Deputy Adjutant General of Artillery by those officers of one of the scientific corps who are now being rapidly superseded by their comrades of the Cavalry?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The brevet promotion referred to came to an end in 1885, and since 1887 its place has been taken by voluntary promotion to half-pay lieutenant colonelcies. I can only refer to the reply I made on February 20 to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeenshire, to the effect that this half-pay promotion is almost obsolete, and that I do not see my way to re-open the question.

THE GRIMSBY TRAWLER "CEYLON."

SIR L. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, seeing that the recent prosecution of Blackburn, commander of the trawler *Ceylon*, for trawling in inshore waters failed for a technicality, and that he was not tried for the offence itself, the Crown will institute proceedings again?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan): It is not quite correct to say that the prosecution failed for a technicality. I explained two days ago the reasons for which it was not further proceeded with, and looking to the lapse of time since the offence is alleged to have been committed, and to all that has taken place in the

interval, it is not intended to institute a new prosecution in this particular case. As I previously stated, however, the law against illegal trawling is being, and will continue to be, strictly enforced.

MR. BUCHANAN: When my right hon. Friend says he is not prepared to revive the proceedings, does he bear in mind the statement of the Sheriff I quoted the other day that this was a most flagrant case?

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Any observation made by the Sheriff Substitute on that occasion must have been extra judicial, inasmuch as evidence had not been had in the case. As to whether it would or would not be possible to revive it I say nothing, because there are serious objections to reviving it under the circumstances.

THE IRISH EDUCATION ACT, 1892.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he proposes to introduce a Bill to remedy the defects in the Irish Education Act of 1892 with respect to raising of the expenses of the School Attendance Committees under the Act?

MR. J. MORLEY: A Bill is ready, and will be introduced at the earliest possible opportunity.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) ACT.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is prepared to state in detailed terms the amendments which he requires in the Public Libraries (Ireland) Act, which passed this House last year, with the object of enabling the Bill to be promoted without delay?

MR. J. MORLEY: It would be impracticable to state in detailed terms, in reply to this question, the amendments which this Bill would require if introduced again in the same form in which it appeared last Session; but I may inform my hon. Friend that, in my opinion, a Bill to carry out the objects aimed at should be framed as nearly as possible on the lines of the Public Libraries Act, 1892 (the English Act), and the main points in which the Bill of last Session differed from that Act have already been pointed out to my hon. Friend.

MR. FIELD: Will the right hon. Gentleman assist me in drafting a Bill?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am afraid I cannot do more than tender the advice I have already given.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT: LONDON VESTRY ELECTIONS.

MR. BARROW (Southwark, Bermondsey): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the Rules and Regulations for the conduct of the London Vestry elections, under the Local Government Bill (England and Wales), will be issued; and whether the clerks to the various Vestries will be appointed returning officers for the Vestry elections in the same way as the clerks to the Unions are now the returning officers for the elections of Guardians?

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The existing members of Vestries elected under the Metropolis Management Acts will continue in office until the elections which are to take place in November next have been held. The necessary Regulations will be issued in ample time for those elections, but I cannot at present state more precisely when they will be issued.

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS.

MR. CURZON (Lancashire, Southport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is now able to state the decision of the Government and to present the promised Correspondence about the question of simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service in India?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The question is under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, but I am not yet in a position to announce their decision, or to present the Correspondence on the subject.

MR. CURZON: I do not wish to press the right hon. Gentleman unfairly, but is he aware that a month ago the late Under Secretary told us the Papers would be presented in a reasonable period, and that they were virtually complete?

MR. H. H. FOWLER said, he regretted that he was not yet in a position to present the Papers.

THE KABUL MISSION.

MR. CURZON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India when the promised Papers concerning the Mission of Sir Mortimer Durand to Kabul and the agreement with the Amir of Afghanistan will be laid upon the Table?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: So soon as it can be done consistently with the interests of the Public Service I will cause these Papers to be presented to Parliament.

SCOTCH COUNTY COUNCILS.

MR. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate can County Councils in Scotland, if they so resolve, hold their statutory meetings outside their respective counties?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR): I do not find any warrant in the Act for County Councils holding their statutory meetings outside their counties. Provision is made in the Act for Committees meeting outside the county, but there is no similar provision in regard to the meetings of County Councils.

MR. A. CROSS: Are we to presume they cannot meet outside their counties?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: There is no statutory provision on the point.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION AT EASTBOURNE.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, after holding a public inquiry last April, the Education Department issued to the borough of Eastbourne on 24th June a final notice for 1,311 places, which expired on 24th July; whether on 10th August last the only proposals before the Department for supplying this deficiency were for 968 places, or 343 less than the expired final notice demanded; whether the Commissioners who held the public inquiry reported that an annual increase of 140 places would be necessary to meet the growth of population, and whether a Wesleyan school for 365 children has been lately closed; whether at this moment the only school provision made or undertaken is for 464 places at Norway, 496 at Upwick, and 540 at Whitley Road, or 1,500 in all, leaving a present deficiency, including the 140 and the 365 places, of

316 places, even if these schools were all open; whether he is aware that the Upwick School is not yet finished, and the Whitley Road School not begun; whether the Department received from the School Attendance Committee of Eastbourne a Resolution declaring that the Whitley Road site was eminently unsuitable; whether all the proposed schools comply with the Rules of planning of the Department; whether he can state the contract price for each school; why the Department did not give effect to the procedure provisions of the Act of 1870 in July last in the case of Eastbourne; and whether they will now proceed to enforce those provisions without further delay?

MR. ACLAND: The public inquiry held at Eastbourne last year settled 1,311 places as the deficiency to be supplied. Since then a further deficiency of 365 places (making a total deficiency of 1,676) has been caused by the closure of the Wesleyan School last month. The final notice expired on the 5th of August, 1893. A committee of voluntary managers undertook to supply the deficiency, and submitted plans for three schools: (1) At Norway Hamlet for 464 children; (2) at Upwick for 496 children, and (3) at Whitley Road for 761 children, or 1,721 places in all to meet the deficiency of 1,676. The sites of all three schools were approved as suitable. The first of the three new schools is finished and open, and the building of both the others is now well advanced. After the Whitley Road site had been approved, and the contract for the building signed, an objection to the site was raised by the Eastbourne School Attendance Committee, but the Department did not see any reason to alter their decision. The contract prices of the three schools are £1,989 10s., £2,180, and £3,530 respectively. In view of complaints made as to the new schools, the Department sent an architect to Eastbourne a few days ago to make a special inquiry. He reports that due despatch is being used in the work; that the building, both in the school already built, which is certainly very unornamental, and in the two now in progress, is in conformity with the plans sanctioned by the Department; and that the latter will be completed by the 15th of May as regards the Upwick

School, 15th of June as regards the boys' and girls' departments of the Whitley Road School, and July 16th as regards the infants' department of that school. It is the duty of the Department under the Act, in the case of an ascertained deficiency, to order the formation of a School Board if it appears that, after due notice, the deficiency is not in course of being supplied with due despatch. So far due despatch seems to have been used, and the Department will continue to exercise all vigilance to see that it is maintained, both in respect of completing the work now in progress and of meeting such further deficiency as arises from time to time owing to growth of population.

MR. CHANNING: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if the architect he sent down satisfied himself as to the substantial character of the schools, as well as with their compliance as to space requirements?

MR. ACLAND: Yes; I asked him that myself. The schools come within the Rules as to new buildings.

MR. BARTLEY: Then, in spite of all the irritation, the people of Eastbourne have complied with the Act in every respect?

MR. ACLAND: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman means by "in spite of all the irritation." They have raised a good round sum of money, and are building the schools.

LABOUR COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS.

MR. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are any Rules for the guidance of Assistant Labour Commissioners as to the nature of statements made to them by witnesses, and which ought or ought not to be inserted in their Reports presented to this House; whether complaints alleged to have been made by a mill manager at Port Glasgow, and set out on page 193 of the Reports of the Lady Assistant Commissioners dealing with the employment of women, in which 1,500 women workers in Mill 54 are stated to be chiefly low class Irish, who are intemperate and immoral, should have been admitted, seeing that further on in the Report the Assistant Commissioner states that she saw no evidence of the immorality alleged; and what steps are

taken to verify statements made to the Assistant Commissioners before these statements are printed and circulated ?

MR. ASQUITH : I am informed by the Chairman of the Labour Commission that, so far as he is aware, it has not been the practice to make any Rules for the guidance of Assistant Commissioners as to the nature of the statements made by witnesses which are to be included in their Reports. The senior Lady Assistant Commissioner was entrusted by the Commission with the duty of supervising generally the Reports of the Assistant Commissioners, and it is believed that this duty has been satisfactorily performed. It is impossible for the Commission as a body to investigate the reliability of the evidence given to the Lady Assistant Commissioners.

MR. DIAMOND : Is there any remedy open to persons who feel themselves aggrieved by these statements ?

MR. ASQUITH : I am not in a position to answer that question.

IRISH POST OFFICE CLOTHING CONTRACTS.

MR. M. HEALY (Cork) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the existing contract for the supply of clothing for Irish Post Office officials is held by a private firm ; and, if so, when the contract was entered into, and when it will expire ; whether, on its expiration, an opportunity will be given to Irish firms to tender for the contract ; and whether it would be possible to arrange that the material for the clothing should be of Irish manufacture, assuming that equally good material could be supplied at the same price ?

MR. A. MORLEY : The present contract for the supply of Post Office uniform clothing in Ireland is for three years, and expires on the 31st instant. It is held by an Irish firm. The new contract, like the present one, will be made by the War Department on behalf of the Post Office ; and it is understood that tenders have already been invited. I am not aware that any condition has been made as to the place where the material for the clothing should be manufactured.

Mr. Diamond

IRISH CONSTABULARY CLOTHING.

MR. M. HEALY : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the existing contract for the supply of clothing to the Royal Irish Constabulary is held by a private firm, or whether the Force is supplied from a Government clothing factory ; when the existing contract was entered into, and when it will expire ; whether on its expiration an opportunity will be given to Irish firms to tender for the contract ; and whether it would be possible to arrange that the material for the clothing should be of Irish manufacture, assuming that equally good material could be supplied at the same price ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The Inspector General informs me that all contracts for the clothing of the Constabulary are given to private firms. The existing contract was entered into on March 1, 1893, and will expire on March 31, 1895 ; it is held by an Irish firm. On its expiration tenders for a new contract will, as on former occasions, be invited by advertisement in the public Press, and Irish firms will be afforded an opportunity of tendering. With regard to the last paragraph of the question, I learn that some years ago Irish woollen manufacturers were invited by advertisement to inspect the standard great-coat cloth at the Constabulary Office, with a view to their proposing to supply the same ; that three manufacturers responded to the advertisement, and stated that, with the exception of great-coat cloth, it would not suit their trade to undertake its manufacture. Samples of this cloth were subsequently received from two of the traders, but the results were unsatisfactory. I should be glad if it were possible to arrange for the manufacture in Ireland of the material for Constabulary uniform, or even a portion thereof, but in order to bring this about it would be necessary that the standard of quality should be maintained without increase of price.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS.

MR. FIELD : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Report of the Bovine Tuberculosis Commission is ready or when it may be expected ?

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: In reply to my inquiry, I am informed that the work of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis is being proceeded with with all possible speed, and that it is hoped that the Report will be issued shortly.

GERMAN PRISON LABOUR.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether large quantities of manufactured goods, mainly produced by unpaid convict prison labour in Germany, are frequently surreptitiously imported into those Kingdoms, and whether the carriage is cheapened by preferential rates; and whether he will have inquiry made into this matter as affecting the industrial progress and taxpaying interest of this country?

MR. MUNDELLA: We understand that prison labour is used in some industrial productions in Germany, but the Board of Trade have received no complaints in the matter. I am assured that there are no surreptitious imports into this country, and we are not aware of any preferential rates on German manufactures.

THE MOUTHS OF THE DANUBE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the European Commission of the Danube continues to perform the duties imposed on it by Article 16 of the Treaty of Paris, 1856, and Article 53 of the Treaty of Berlin, 1878, to clear the mouths of the Danube and the neighbouring parts of the sea from sands or other impediments, to facilitate the navigation, and to exercise its powers as far as Galatz in complete independence of the territorial authorities; whether there is any foundation for the statements recently made in the Press that Russia, as one of the territorial authorities on one of the banks of the Kilia arm of the river, has objected to the Commission exercising its powers in complete independence of her, and has proposed to exclude it altogether from independent action in the Kilia arm; whether, in view of the great importance of the Kilia arm as commanding the whole trade of the Danube, and as affecting the prosperity of Roumania, Her Majesty's Government will use its influence to cause that arm to be kept clear

and open for navigation; and whether any Papers relating to the subject can be laid upon the Table of the House?

*SIR E. GREY: I am afraid I can only again refer the hon. Member to the Treaty of London of 1883 for details connected with the Kilia branch of the Danube. We have no reason to suppose that the Russians intend to undertake any operations as regards the Kilia mouth, and Her Majesty's Government see no reason for raising any question connected with the European Commission of the Danube at the present time. Reports are received from Her Majesty's Representative on the Commission from time to time, but they deal mainly with details connected with the navigation of the river, and there will be no object in laying them upon the Table of the House.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Am I to understand that under the Berlin Act of 1883 the general powers of the Commission are maintained? Is it not a fact that a Protocol attached to the Treaty especially affirms this right?

*SIR E. GREY: I have not a copy of the Treaty before me. If the hon. Member has read the Treaty I will accept his statement that he is quoting it correctly.

ZOBEHR PASHA.

MR. CURZON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there has been a Correspondence between Sir William Marriott, Lord Cromer, and Lord Rosebery on the subject of the claims of Zobehr Pasha against the Egyptian Government, and whether there is any objection to laying the Correspondence upon the Table of the House; whether Sir William Marriott has suggested a Parliamentary or judicial inquiry into the matter; and whether Her Majesty's Government intends to accede to that suggestion?

*SIR E. GREY: Such a Correspondence has taken place, and Sir William Marriott has suggested a Parliamentary or judicial inquiry into the matter in this country. Her Majesty's Government do not think such a procedure would be suitable or desirable, and cannot, therefore, support the suggestion. The question is, in their opinion, one for decision by the Egyptian Government or Tribunals, and it would serve no useful purpose to

lay the Correspondence before the House.

METROPOLITAN POLICE COURT CLERKS.

MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for West Marylebone, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the practice whereby the chief and other clerks of the London and Sheerness Police Courts receive and retain for their own use, in addition to their salaries, certain fees for supplying copies of depositions to prosecutors and others; and whether he can state if this practice is authorised by any statutory authority?

MR. ASQUITH: I am aware of the practice referred to, which has existed for many years with the cognisance of the Treasury and Exchequer and Audit Department. I am not aware of any express statutory authority under which the fees in question are payable to the clerks; but it is a matter of great importance in the interests of justice that copies of depositions should be prepared rapidly and accurately for the use of prosecutors and others; and as the making of these copies is outside the official duties of the Police Court clerks, the Metropolitan Police Magistrates have, with my own and my predecessor's approval, sanctioned the existing scale of fees. I may add that I have had recently under my consideration the whole question of the remuneration of the Police Court clerks, and proposals are now being weighed under which the fees in question would be transferred to the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): Is it not a fact that the salaries of these valuable public servants are limited by Statute to what many people think a very moderate sum?

MR. ASQUITH: They were so limited; I do not know what they stand at at the present moment.

UGANDA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have now come to a decision on the Uganda Question; and whether any action will

be taken in carrying out any decision of the Government before the opportunity has been given for a full discussion of the subject in the House of Commons?

SIR E. GREY: As was stated on Tuesday, the Government will communicate their decision with reference to Uganda soon after Easter, and an opportunity will be given to discuss it. No instructions have been sent to put matters on a different footing in Uganda to that on which they were left by Sir G. Portal, and unless any unforeseen emergency should arise it is not intended to send any till after the decision has been announced to the House.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

MR. H. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if it will be necessary, notwithstanding the passing of the new Local Government Act, for the Parish Vestries to appoint new Overseers and Highway Surveyors to hold office till next November; and if the Local Government Board intend shortly to issue Circulars instructing the various Local Authorities as to their powers and duties under the new Act?

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: My answer to the hon. Member for South Norfolk deals with the first point in this question. As regards the second, the Local Government Board have issued Circulars to Boards of Guardians, Urban Sanitary Authorities, and Highway Authorities explaining the position of matters as regards elections in the current year. The Board are preparing other Circulars, which will be issued very shortly.

SIR C. W. DILKE: The words "till November" are used, but will not the officers now to be appointed hold office till March next?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I must ask for notice of that.

WARNED SCHOOLS.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will assent to a quarterly Return, commencing from 1st January, 1894, and giving the names of schools from which the Department have threatened to withhold the Parliamentary Grant, and specifying the matters of

complaint on account of which this course has been taken?

MR. ACLAND: This question was only put down last night, but I can say generally that I think a quarterly Return from the 1st of next month can be given, which will meet in the main what the noble Lord asks for.

THE DECLARATION OF PARIS.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Attorney General whether, under the Rules laid down by the Declaration of Paris, 1856, those Powers which have abstained from agreeing to and are not bound by it would, in the event of their being at war with Great Britain, retain their right, under the Law of Nations, to fit out and use privateers against British commerce, and also their right to capture British goods in neutral vessels, whether those goods were contraband of war or not; whether, in such an event, Great Britain, having agreed to the Declaration, and being bound to it as towards all the other Powers who have also agreed to it, would have the right to capture her enemy's goods in neutral vessels belonging to such other Powers; or whether she would be bound to refrain from exercising that right as against her enemy while submitting to its exercise as against herself; and whether he can state what Powers have up to this time abstained from agreeing to the Declaration of Paris?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): The first two inquiries of the hon. Member relate to certain legal questions with reference to hypothetical cases which the hon. Member puts and as to which my opinion is asked. I consider that I am not bound to answer these questions, which do not relate to any matter under the consideration of this House, nor is it for the public interest that I should do so. I therefore respectfully decline to answer them. As to the third question, which is one of fact, I have to state that the United States of America, Spain, and some of the South American States are the principal Powers which have not up to this time agreed to the Declaration of Paris.

VETERINARY COLLEGE IN DUBLIN.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in

addition to the sum of £15,000 proposed to be allocated for the establishment of a Veterinary College in Dublin, he is prepared to moderately endow the institution as one appertaining to technical education in Ireland?

*MR. HOZIER: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, may I inquire whether the Government propose to give for the benefit of veterinary science in Scotland a grant corresponding to the £15,000; and, if not, why not?

MR. J. MORLEY: Perhaps my hon. Friend will allow me to answer the question. I do not think it is possible to add to the proposed grant of £15,000 any proposal for the endowment of the institution. I may inform the hon. Member who put the supplementary question that the money to be granted for the purposes of this college is not Imperial money, but that it comes from a certain Irish fund intended for purely Irish purposes. It does not follow that Scotland should have a like grant.

PROPOSED IRISH BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government are considering a scheme for the establishment of a Board of Agriculture for Ireland, which was promised favourable consideration by the late Premier?

MR. J. MORLEY (who replied) said: My right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian, in answering a similar question a short time ago, said—

"We have no proposal to make upon the subject, but shall be glad to find some opportunity of considering a plan for that purpose. I should like, however, to see the evidence taken before a Select Committee, which I hope the House would appoint, before consenting to a proposal for the establishment of a Board of Agriculture for Ireland."

THE SILVER QUESTION AND OUR EASTERN TRADE.

MR. WHITELEY: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received a Memorial from the General Council of the London Chamber of Commerce reciting that, owing to the extremely unsatisfactory state of the silver question, and the grave injury inflicted upon our Eastern trade by the heavy fall and violent fluctuations in exchange, and the great uncertainty as

to the future, it was desirable that Her Majesty's Government should take such steps as would lead to the meeting of another International Conference; and whether the Government has this communication, which refers to an injury suffered by a trade amounting to nearly £250,000,000 annually, under its consideration?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have received the Memorial to which my hon. Friend refers. I have already stated that the Government have received no intimation of any desire of any Foreign Government for the reassembling of the Monetary Conference, and they themselves have no intention of making any such proposal.

MR. WHITELEY: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the last paragraph of the question.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I said I had received the Memorial.

INDIAN IMPORTS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will suggest to the Indian Government the expediency of raising their Revenue by the taxation of German, French, and other Foreign imports, and admitting British goods as heretofore?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Differential duties existed in the time of the East India Company; but all distinction between goods of British and those of foreign origin was swept away by the Tariff of 1859; and it is not, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, expedient to return to the former practice.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the colonies of France, Germany, and other countries do make special conditions in favour of the Mother Country?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Yes; but I am not prepared to say their fiscal system is better than ours.

LORD ROSEBERY'S VISIT TO EDINBURGH.

MR. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask whether it is true that the Prime Minister, being a Peer and Lord Lieutenant for the County of Edinburgh, is to address a public meeting on political topics in Edinburgh during the present week; whether, a new Writ

having been issued for the Leith District, situated within the county, and in close proximity to the City of Edinburgh, the conduct of the Prime Minister is not calculated to influence the election; and whether such conduct does not fall within the spirit and letter of the Sessional Order touching the interference of Peers and Lord Lieutenants in Parliamentary elections?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Although questions of this kind are put from time to time, with the view apparently of preventing Peers from taking part in Parliamentary elections, they have, I think, only a partial success. Matters of this kind are settled rather by precedent than by argument. I am certainly not prepared to state that the speech of a Prime Minister, wherever delivered, is not calculated to influence elections whenever and wherever they take place. It depends a good deal upon what the election is and who the Prime Minister is, and I am not prepared to state the exact mileage of the sphere of influence that he may possibly have. But if the hon. Member desires to know what is the proper course for a Prime Minister to take who happens to live in proximity to the place where a contested election is occurring, I recommend him to consider the occasion when Mr. Disraeli was Prime Minister and was made a Peer, and when he vacated his seat in this House in consequence of his being created a Peer. I think the first public act of his as Prime Minister and a Peer was to make a very important political speech during the election for the very seat which he had vacated in his own county and in immediate proximity to his own residence. It was a very important and very remarkable speech, and if the hon. Member wishes to understand exactly how a speech of that kind ought to be made he will find it a very judicious model for all Prime Ministers in these circumstances. The hon. Member is mistaken in saying that Lord Rosebery occupies the position of Lord Lieutenant in Edinburgh. Edinburgh is a city and county, and he is not Lord Lieutenant in Edinburgh.

*MR. HOZIER: Was not Edinburgh included in the scope of the Scotch Sea Fisheries Bill because it was supposed to be in the County of Midlothian?

Mr. Whiteley

SIR W. HARCOURT: We are on the subject of the Lord Lieutenancy. There was a time when Lord Lieutenants thought they ought not to interfere in political matters in their own counties, but the abstention is not always observed now. I know that the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire came to Derby to make a speech against its Representative. Therefore, there are exceptions to the rule that Lord Lieutenants should not interfere in political affairs in their own counties.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): Is the House to understand that the Government admit that the Standing Order of the House of Commons respecting the interference of Peers at elections is about to be broken, and that the only excuse for breaking it that the Government make is that it has been broken before?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Member must not assume that I admit anything.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Was not next Saturday's meeting at Edinburgh arranged some weeks ago, before there was any prospect of an election for the Leith District?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I believe that is so.

THE VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Vote on Account will be taken?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Vote on Account will, I think, be taken most conveniently on Wednesday, the 21st instant. My great object is to free hon. Members on both sides of the House as early as I can from controversial business, so that they may go away. Therefore, what I propose is that we should take the Vote on Account with the Report of Supply on the 21st, and if that business is concluded on that day there will be nothing to prevent Members from going away on the Thursday before Good Friday.

PAUPER ALIENS.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): When will the Pauper Alien Returns for January be issued?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have inquired about the matter, and am informed that, in accordance with the Rules of the House,

the Board of Trade are not at liberty to circulate the Returns for January until the new Session has commenced. In accordance with the Orders, the Return was laid on the Table of the House immediately the new Session began. In the meantime, however, the particulars were published in *The Board of Trade Journal*.

BELFAST AND NEWCASTLE POST OFFICES.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he could state what amounts of revenue are derived from the Cities of Belfast and Newcastle respectively by the Post Office?

*MR. A. MORLEY: I regret that I am unable to give the information asked for by the hon. Member, inasmuch as there are no statistics in the possession of the Department which would enable me to do so.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government will now agree to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the financial relations of Scotland to the other Division of the United Kingdom, and to the Imperial Exchequer?

*SIR W. HARCOURT: The Government will agree to the appointment of such a Committee, but desire its postponement for a time till there is less financial pressure on the officials of the Treasury than at the present moment.

MR. COCHRANE: Will it be done before Whitsuntide?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I will inquire.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (INTRODUCTION OF BILLS).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wish to say that it would be a great convenience to the officers of the House if hon. Gentlemen would be good enough to put the number which each gentleman has gained in the Ballot upon the Notice which he hands in with his Bill.

Ordered, That To-morrow the introduction of Bills have precedence of the Orders of the Day.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES), 1893-4.

CLASS II.

1. £1,200, Supplementary, House of Commons Offices.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) said, these expenses were growing very fast. He noticed that £300 a year extra was charged for going through the names in Petitions, and he also saw that £200 more was required for the new arrangement for orders of admission. He wanted to know whether it was merely a temporary increase, or would it be a permanent increase?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) said, that these items were nearly all owing to the extraordinary length of the Session. The Treasury had no control over these expenses. Very few of the items in the Vote would occur again, unless they had another extraordinary Session such as the one just terminated, which they all trusted would not happen again. With regard to the Petitions, he had himself considered the question, and had asked the authorities whether it would not be possible to have some cheaper method of doing the work. He would call the attention of the Chairman of the Committee on Petitions to the subject.

Mr. HANBURY said, he had never been able to understand why the Civil Service expenses connected with the House of Commons and the House of Lords should not be placed upon the same footing as items in other Public Departments. He hoped the Treasury would consider the inauguration of a more reasonable system of dealing with the business of this House, and he trusted that they would have control over these expenses. Having regard to what

happened to the officials of the House of Lords last Session, he thought the time had come when the House of Commons should set an example in this matter.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he would like to know what the officers of the House did respecting these matters. According to his right hon. Friend, the present practice was about as bad as it could be, because the Treasury had no control. Practically, therefore, there was no control except what was exercised in Committee. In the existing state of things nobody could give an authoritative reply to questions on this Vote, or furnish information as to the actual state of affairs. He hoped the Government would take the earliest opportunity of effecting an alteration.

Sir A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he would like to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the whole system, involving so much cost as these Petitions did, could not be re-considered from first to last. This year there was an increase of some hundreds of pounds in the cost of counting, and then there was the cost of printing.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked whether, considering the length of the last Session, the case of the underpaid messengers and others would be remembered.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, that a number of extra men were appointed to deal with the work last Session. He sympathised with the object which his hon. Friend the Member for Preston had in view, but it was not easy to give effect to it. In the first place, it would require legislation. The whole of the management of the officers of the House was carried on under Act of Parliament. The power to meet and consider these items of expenditure was now vested in the Speaker, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, and several other important officers of State. They had the power of considering this question of salaries and of expenditure, but so far as the Treasury was concerned it had no power over that expenditure. With regard to Petitions, he had said before that he was anxious to draw the attention of the Committee to that matter, and he would be very glad if they would take into consideration some cheaper method of carrying it out. For his own part, he

did not see any great advantage in going through the number of signatures to Petitions, but when any charge was made as to want of honesty in a Petition the Committee ought to have power to examine into it closely.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that the right hon. Gentleman had rather sheltered himself behind the Commission, and had stated that the Treasury had no power in this matter, but unless he could get a satisfactory assurance from him he was afraid he would have to begin on this Vote with a long series of Motions for reduction. He had had a Report made of pluralists in the Public Service—those who held more than one office—and he found that the number was 439.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT rose to Order, and submitted that the question of pluralists was not one that should be introduced on this Vote.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said, the question of pluralists did not seem to be relevant to this Vote, and he did not think it would be in Order.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he would not pursue the subject. With regard to the cost of counting signatures to public Petitions, he did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman said he would give up that system. He did not know what was to be done with Petitions. He conceived that it might be advisable either to print them and bind them up in such a shape as would form interesting reading for wet Sundays, or to make a *precis* of them, or they might be useful for bonfires on November 5. But to do no more than count the signatures was futile, and when he found that the cost of counting them amounted to £550 a year, his conscience revolted, and his constituents would not think he was doing his duty if he did not protest against it.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he desired to emphasise what had been said with regard to those at the bottom of the staff, who received from £1 to £2 a week. He was bound to say that the House was always ready to give an increase to the higher officials, but they altogether forgot the lower ones. If he remembered rightly, last year his right hon. Friend suggested that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into this subject. Could the right hon. Gentleman promise that a Committee would be appointed

during this Session, or that the whole matter would be considered?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he had no power to do so. The power rested with the Speaker and the other Commissioners, under Act of Parliament.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, he did not wish to dwell upon the appointment of a Select Committee, but he confessed that he thought the Commission was a wise provision made by Statute. Of course, he assumed that the Commission was a practical working body, composed of eminent persons, they had been told, holding high office in the State, and he assumed that the Commission met with tolerable frequency, and that all these important matters were fully considered by them. He did not think the Committee would wish to take the control out of their hands. The Secretary of State for the Home Department would be able to inform them how many times the Commission met during the year, and whether any record of its proceedings was preserved.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that in view of what had been said by the Secretary to the Treasury he would bring the matter forward again on the Vote on Account. He desired to protest against what he had said—namely, that because this was a Statutory Commission they could not appoint a Select Committee to consider it. If he recollected rightly, this House had many a time appointed a Select Committee to consider the effects of Acts of Parliament, and he therefore did not think that would be a bar at all.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I may say, speaking quite frankly, that I have never heard of the existence of this Commission, or that I was one of its Members. The Committee may draw what inference it pleases from that fact.

MR. HANBURY asked the late Home Secretary (MR. MATTHEWS), who had held Office for some six years, to give the House the benefit of any information he possessed with regard to the Commission.

MR. MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.): I can only say that I have never received a summons to attend during the whole of the six years I had the honour of holding office. I can only infer, of course, from that fact that no meeting of the

Commission took place during that time. Of course it would be impossible that a Member of it, even an *ex officio* Member, should receive no summons.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he desired to call attention on this Vote to the question of pluralists. He found that no less a person than the Serjeant-at-Arms was a pluralist. He received £1,200 a year as the Serjeant-at-Arms, in addition to £114 which he received as Groom of the Robes.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT rose to Order. The item of £300 did not in any way include the salary of the Serjeant-at-Arms, nor did it refer to anyone who could properly be termed a pluralist. There were wages paid to extra cleaners and messengers.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that it was hardly consistent with the dignity of the House that its Serjeant-at-Arms should be also a Groom of the Robes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said, the hon. Member had had his explanation. It had been stated that the Vote did not apply to anyone who might be called a pluralist, and, therefore, the hon. Member was out of Order.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that he must ask for details, as the Committee had not got any statement before them.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he understood the learned Attorney General was also a Member of the Commission, and he would like to ask him what his experience was of the work of the Commission?

*SIR C. RUSSELL: I wish to say that if I have the honour of being a Member of this Commission, I now hear of it for the first time.

DR. CLARK said, it was very clear that this Commission was not very efficient, but partook of the nature of a sham. Practically, so far as he could see, £300 came under the control of the Committee on Petitions, and a Committee of this House was spending the money. As individual members of that Committee they must see that the money was not being thrown away. When the constitution of this Committee came before the House, they would require to know something on the subject. He regretted that the officers of the House had not received anything for the extra work they had done.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S. E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, if the Commission did not sit, who did the work of appointing the Commissioners?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I can only say that the Speaker undertakes the responsibility of representing the Commission.

MR. HANBURY said, he should move to abolish this system altogether when they came to the Civil Service Estimates. He understood there was a Statutory Commission which was to meet to regulate appointments of officials, and various financial matters connected with this House. As he understood it, that Commission never sat; everything was transacted by the Speaker, or one of the permanent officials. He should like to know whether, under the Statute, the Speaker had the power to appoint all the officials of this House, and practically manage it as the head of one Department without at all calling into action his colleagues on that Commission? They had the Statute forming this Commission and requiring it to meet and carry on the business of the House, and if it had not met for six years the question was, had the business of the House been transacted contrary to the Statute during the whole of these six years?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he did not go quite so far as to say that this Commission had not been carrying out its work. He believed that the Speaker, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had, from time to time, taken into consideration matters in connection with the salaries of this House. The Commission, as a body, had not sat for a long period. He knew one period during which they held sittings, for he had seen the Report of their meetings, and that was in the year 1880. He did not say they had not met at other times. Any member of the Commission had the power of calling the Commissioners together by applying to the Speaker. If they had not recently been called together, he did not know that the Speaker had conferred from time to time with the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day for the purpose of considering all questions with reference to this House. He should say the best plan for his hon. Friend the Member for Preston to follow would be to bring the matter forward on some Notice of Motion on going into Supply. It was deserving of consideration, and he thought that

would be the best way by which the hon. Member could accomplish the object he had in view.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, the right hon. Gentleman had stated that it was competent for any member of the Commission to call the Commission together, but it appeared from the testimony of both Front Benches that a number of the Commissioners did not know they were members of the Commission. If they did not know they were Commissioners, how did they know they had power to call the Commission together? Would the right hon. Gentleman take steps to let these gentlemen know they were Commissioners and had this power?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: It is impossible to take any steps except through the proper authority of the House—that is, the Speaker. I will take every step I can to bring this discussion before him, and I shall be able to take his advice upon the best course to pursue.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, this was evidently a serious matter. So far as he could detect, it was something like the Liberator Society. Here was he believing there was nothing wrong in the matter because he knew the Home Secretary, the Attorney General, and such like had given their names to the Commission. Now, however, they knew the Commission had been summoned once in the year 1880, and since then occasionally a Commissioner had been consulted by the Speaker or the authorities. How did they get these names? He had been reposing in the trust that the Home Secretary was a member of the Commission, and he had also been under the impression that in some sort of way his right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury was also exercising a certain supervision over the matter. But one gentleman after another repudiated it and said he had never heard of it. It was like getting money from the public on the faith of certain names appearing on a prospectus and then gentlemen saying they did not know their names were upon such a document. They ought to have some understanding on the matter. He was not going to say anything about the Serjeant-at-Arms being also Groom of the Stole; but he wanted to know were any of these cleaners pluralists. Did they also act as Ladies of the Bed-Chamber?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER): I must warn the hon. Gentleman that he is trifling with the Committee.

MR. LABOUCHERE considered they had a right to know whether any person under the denomination of a cleaner had any other pay from the Government.

MR. A. C. MORTON desired to know whether this Estimate had been before the Commission and sanctioned by them?

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, that some years ago he brought certain matters before the House, and there was then an implied promise that they should be brought before the Commissioners. That was in 1887, and yet they had no information with regard to the Commission having sat during all this intervening period. That being so, they were not carrying out the Statute at all with regard to these matters.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT would like to say one or two words with reference to the observations of the hon. Member for Northampton. That hon. Member rather suggested that his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary had given his name to this Commission. He would like to point out that this was a permanent Commission created by Acts of Parliament, the first in the time of George III., on which certain officials were named as Commissioners, including the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Secretaries of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Master of the Rolls, and the Attorney and Solicitor Generals for the time being. He would again suggest that the hon. Member should raise this question by way of a Notice of Motion on going into Supply.

SIR A. ROLLIT said, there was a more important aspect of the question than the one of alteration or reform, and that was—was there any authority whatever for making these payments? Obviously the question of the regulation of the House and the salaries of the officials was entrusted to a Statutory Commission, which was to take care that these salaries were properly adjusted, and unless the right hon. Gentleman was able to give the House the assurance that the Commissioners had met and had sanctioned these payments, the House had no authority whatever to deal with it. Here they had an increase of from £220 to

£530 for merely counting signatures, and the right hon. Gentleman did not give them a vestige of authority or sanction for the grounds upon which that change took place. He did not see how, strictly speaking, the House was in a position to make these payments without committing a breach of the Act of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman was bound to give them some assurance that the matters had been investigated and were in order, so that the House would have something on which to act.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, everything had been in order, and these accounts would all be passed by the Committee on Public Accounts, who were authorised by this House to deal with any of the Estimates at present under the consideration of the Committee. All these items had been considered by the authorities of the House and authorised by the Speaker. He was told it was not usual to call the Commission together except when any new appointments were made or salaries were revised. It was not usual to call the Commission together to consider normal expenditure.

Vote agreed to.

2. £1,200, Supplementary, Home Office.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, he did not rise for the purpose of questioning the amount, still less questioning the principle, of this Supplementary Estimate; but they must bear in mind that a Supplementary Estimate was supposed to consist of expenditure which could not have been foreseen when the regular Estimate was presented to Parliament. He wished an explanation as to how it was, under the circumstances, which were common knowledge, that this expenditure was not foreseen to the extent of making it possible to have it in the original Estimate. He could not help bearing in mind that about the time when the regular Estimate for the Home Office staff was being prepared, or rather at the time when it was still possible to insert additional items, the Home Secretary was at Liverpool proclaiming his intention to pursue, to use a general term, a forward policy with regard to the Factory Act passed by the late Home Secretary. That intention could have been inferred from the fact that he described the

Factory Act as a dead letter up to the time he took Office. That being the intention of the right hon. Gentleman, it was very extraordinary that this expenditure which was necessarily to be involved in a policy of this kind should be so very little foreseen. It was a fact that no sum was taken for this service at all in the original Estimate, but in another part of the Home Office Estimate it had been the practice to provide for special inquiries by a sum of £1,000. That sum not only was not increased, but was diminished this year to a slight extent. A considerable period of time seemed to have elapsed between the announcement by the Home Secretary at Liverpool and the appointment of the Committees he so announced; and there were only two possible conclusions which could be drawn from this fact. Either the right hon. Gentleman did not foresee that there was any really practical work or any work involving special effort or expenditure going to take place; or, if he did foresee such a thing, there were other Members of the Government with whom he found a difficulty in getting the necessary funds provided. In the latter case all he (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) could say was that the right hon. Gentleman, although he was entitled to take credit for himself in this matter, was not able to claim credit for the whole of the Government to which he belonged.

MR. ASQUITH (who was indistinctly heard) said, that as far as his recollection went the Home Office Estimate was prepared in the latter end of the year, and he did not think at that time he had any definite idea of carrying out these special inquiries. The hon. Member had referred to a speech of his in Liverpool in January, 1893, in which he used some general language as to his intention to appoint Committees of Inquiry into certain dangerous trades; but, as a matter of fact, the earliest of these Committees was not appointed until the following April. The work done by such Committees was very valuable. He had been most careful to make the inquiries as inexpensive as he possibly could; but the necessity of employing scientific experts, both as members and as witnesses, and of incurring a considerable amount of travelling expenses, had led to a larger sum than he anticipated, or was altogether

glad to see. He was, however, satisfied that such expenditure would turn out in the long run to be economical expenditure, and be a great saving of life and health in these industries.

MR. HANBURY urged the advisability of the publication of the Reports of these inquiries.

MR. ASQUITH: All the Reports have been published and laid on the Table of the House.

MR. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.) asked whether the Committee which had to do with the lead industry received any information as to the most valuable inquiries with reference to lead mining which had taken place in Western Australia?

MR. ASQUITH was not aware, but would inquire into the matter.

MR. A. C. MORTON had no doubt that this money had been very usefully spent, and the work done important. He noticed at the bottom of the page, "Deduct from Estimate net savings on other sub-heads of the Vote £1,600." He objected to this way of keeping accounts. They made savings under some sub-heads, but the Departments were allowed to spend them on other matters. That was objectionable, and if too much money was voted it ought to be returned. It was the practice of Departments to get more money voted than they wanted, and then if anything turned up they might not have thought of before they could spend these savings on what they liked, and unless they wanted more money than the savings they did not come to Parliament at all. The savings under certain sub-heads ought not to be spent on other matters.

MR. ASQUITH said, the question which the hon. Member had raised did not affect this particular Vote, and was a matter for the general Estimates, and not one over which he (Mr. Asquith) exercised any responsibility. He could not see any serious danger in this connection. As far as this Vote was concerned, they stated the whole amount they proposed to spend, and then they set forth that as they had saved £1,600 on the financial year they only asked for £1,200, the £1,600 saved making up the £2,800 required. He failed to see any objection to that.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, his contention was that what was voted for

certain specific purposes ought not to be spent on purposes entirely different.

Vote agreed to.

3. £1,500, Supplementary, Colonial Office.

DR. CLARK desired to know how much had really been spent on telegrams? As far as he could see there was £2,250; was that all for South Africa? He saw that £5,000 for telegrams to the High Commissioner was extra, and he desired to know whether £7,250 instead of £1,500 had been spent extra on these telegrams?

*SIR A. ROLLIT did not grudge the telegrams, because it was important the Government should have the quickest information, but he did think it was sometimes questionable whether the Government got value for the expenditure thus incurred. In the present case the cost of telegrams in relation to South Africa alone was £6,000, being an increase of £3,750 on the original Estimate of £2,250. He would like to contrast what private enterprise sometimes secured with what found its way to the Government. Recently there was an unfortunate conflict in the neighbourhood of Zambesi between our Authorities and the Portuguese Authorities. A statement of the events and the details of the occurrence had appeared in *The Times*, if not in other papers, but the Government up to this time had received no direct official information by telegram or otherwise. Private enterprise had anticipated the Government by 10 days or a fortnight. He should like to know whether the Government had received direct information on this matter by telegram or otherwise? If not, they were led to the conclusion that notwithstanding their large expenditure a newspaper was in possession of much earlier information than the Government with all its resources.

MR. HANBURY pointed out that the Supplementary Estimate referred to the expenses of telegrams to South Africa, but there must also be telegrams to be paid for from South Africa, so that the expense would be even larger than appeared on this Vote. Perhaps his hon. Friend would also be able to say whether the expenditure in telegrams had been in any way increased by the remarks made in the House by the hon. Member

for Northampton in reference to South African affairs.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.) said, he thought that in many cases a little expenditure in postage stamps would effect almost as good an object as a large expenditure in telegrams. He was aware that the Colonial Office did not show that despatch in answering letters even which might be expected. He knew of one case in which complaints from very important Bodies of gross interference with public rights and the rights of the subject in South Africa had been sent to the Colonial Office as long ago as January, and yet the people who had sent them, though they were in London, had not received even an acknowledgment of their receipt. It would be well, therefore, if there was a little more expenditure on postage in the Colonial Office.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, that the great addition to the expenditure on telegrams was due to the Matabele War, when it was necessary that the authorities at home should be kept informed of what was going on in the front, to the Swaziland Conventions, and the disturbances in Pondoland. It might be that if there was no such thing as the telegraph, the affairs of the Colonial Office would be better conducted. But as they had the telegraph things were conducted by telegram, which was a very expensive amusement, and not quite so efficient as they would wish. With regard to the communications between the Portuguese and the British Authorities, if the hon. Member for South Islington put down a question on the subject he would obtain the necessary information. As to whether the cost of telegrams was in any way increased by the questions put by his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton in the House with regard to South African affairs, he should say that it was unquestionably so. When assertions were made in the House as to public concerns the Government had to obtain at the earliest possible moment information in regard to them. But they could not put the blame for the increased cost on the hon. Member for Northampton. If an hon. Member in the exercise of his duty found it necessary to raise matters in the House, the Govern-

ment were bound to obtain the necessary information.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that as he was neither a company promoter nor a holder of shares in those bogus companies, he thought this expenditure for telegrams was a waste altogether. He thought the company promoters ought to be made to pay it. He hoped the Radical Government, considering how many poor people there were in the country who had nothing to do with company promoters, would not waste the taxpayers' money in this fashion. They were told with regard to the Vote, that though the cost of telegrams had increased by £2,250, there had been a saving in salaries. Therefore, the Government proposed to take money voted for salaries to defray the cost of telegrams. If a sufficient saving had been made in salaries to cover the extra cost of telegrams the Government would not have come to the House at all, and the House would have known nothing about the increase in the cost of telegrams. In all those Departments it was the practice to spend money on purposes for which it had never been voted by the House. He thought that if there was a saving on any Vote the money should go back to the Treasury, and the Department should come to the House for any extra money they might want. He hoped his hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary would promise, as the Home Secretary had promised on the previous Vote, to have this objectionable practice put a stop to in the Department which he represented.

DR. CLARK said, that if the hon. Member for Preston had read the telegrams with regard to South Africa published in the Blue Book, he would see that the expenditure was not due to the action of his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, but was due to the Colonial Office sending out telegrams protesting against the filibusters and freebooters under the control of the Chartered Company. As to the murder and looting which had taken place in South Africa, the subject would come up on another Vote, and would be then discussed. He merely wished to say now that it was not an economist like his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, but the Chartered Company, that was responsible for the increased expenditure in telegrams.

Mr. Hanbury

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he had been told that whilst out of the House his hon. Friend the Under Secretary had placed the responsibility for this large increase in the cost of telegrams on his shoulders. He never could get the real facts from his hon. Friend. He never attached the slightest importance to these telegrams. His hon. Friend telegraphed to Sir Henry Loch; Sir Henry Loch telegraphed to the person implicated, and then a most unsatisfactory telegram was sent home. He thought the whole expenditure should be charged to the Chartered Company.

MR. S. BUXTON said, he had not thrown the responsibility for the increase in the telegrams on his hon. Friend. On the contrary, he had said that his hon. Friend was not in any way responsible for the extra expenditure. With regard to the question raised by his hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough, he thought it of importance, and it would receive attention so far as the Colonial Office was concerned.

Vote agreed to.

4. £1,081, Supplementary, Local Government Board.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether it was in connection with the cholera that this extra expenditure had been incurred? He had frequently drawn attention in the House to the way in which the expenses for the prevention of the introduction of cholera into these countries had been borne. He had been told that it was absolutely necessary that the localities should bear the expenses. Was this extra item of expenditure incurred by the visits of Inspectors to localities in order to dictate to the localities the money they should spend for a national purpose, without any choice of their own? He would also point out that the House passed a Vote every year for quarantine. If quarantine was no security against the introduction of cholera, it was no use at all; and if it were a security against cholera, why should those men go about the country incurring this extra expenditure?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I would remind the hon. Gentleman that this has nothing to do with quarantine. Quarantine is confined to yellow fever. If the hon. Gentleman was in the post which I had the honour to occupy last year,

he would be aware that when an outbreak of cholera occurs the first step taken by the people of the locality, by the general public, and by the House of Commons, is to ask the Local Government Board to immediately send down an Inspector to investigate all the circumstances of the affected district, and to see that the proper remedies are taken to prevent any spread of the disease. I can assure the Committee that it was to the admirable manner in which these gentlemen conducted their work that we were able to grapple with the cholera in 1892 and 1893. I do not think any money has been so well spent, or from which the country has received a more adequate compensation, than this small sum for medical inspection in a time of very great difficulty. I am sure the country, as well as the Local Government Board, owe a debt of obligation to those gentlemen, who were ready at all times to proceed to those places where outbreaks of cholera occurred.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that if the right hon. Gentleman referred to the Act of George IV., which he would find on the Table, he would see that quarantine referred not only to yellow fever, but to every infectious disease, and to merchandise as well as to persons. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would refer to the Act, and make him a very handsome apology.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS III.

5. £25,000, Supplementary, Law Charges.

MR. HANBURY said, he found under Sub-head B £14,000 for agents' fees—fees of counsel and fees and expenses of expert witnesses bulked together. He should like to know the amount paid to each class. He found that a sum of £6,200 was paid in fees and expenses to expert witnesses in the cordite case. Two of the expert witnesses, Sir F. Abel and Mr. Dewar, were strongly interested in the case, and considering the amounts which the patent brought them in from foreign countries, he did not think it possible that any of this money could have gone to them. He was inclined to divide against Votes for expert witnesses altogether, because they were paid by one side or the other in a case; and he would

certainly divide against this Vote unless he got a satisfactory explanation.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, the Vote for Law Charges was always larger than it ought to be, and for the same reason the administration of the Criminal Law was poisoned at its source. With regard to prisoners brought before Magistrates in boroughs, there was no room for doubt or misgiving; but with regard to prisoners brought before Magistrates in rural districts, it was unfortunate that under the present system Magistrates' clerks had often a financial interest in having prisoners committed for trial. His experience was not very extensive in that respect, but he knew of one case at least in which a man was returned for trial without any legal ground, and though the Magistrates were inclined to discharge him, because of the influence of the Magistrates' clerk. This was no new complaint. He had brought it frequently before the House. The present Attorney General had admitted the evil and deplored it; the present Lord Chancellor when Solicitor General; the House had made the same admission; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury when Solicitor General also recognised the evil. He therefore thought this practice of committing innocent persons, or even guilty persons, when there was not sufficient evidence, simply because the Magistrates' clerk had a financial interest in the matter, ought to be carefully guarded against.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that with regard to the fees and expenses paid to expert witnesses, the Committee ought to be at least informed of the principle on which they were paid—whether according to the amount of knowledge they possessed or otherwise. He should like to point out that this increase in the expenditure represented 60 per cent. of an increase on the original amount. The original amount was £41,000, and now they were asked to vote £25,000 additional. He should say that it reflected no credit on those who prepared the original Estimate that they were not within 60 per cent. of the expenditure.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he noticed that the original Estimate for the expenses of the intervention of the Queen's Proctor in divorce cases was £4,000, and that the Committee were now asked for an addi-

tional Vote of £2,000. He was aware that by the existing law if the two parties concerned wanted a divorce and got up a case against one of the parties and a decree was pronounced, if it were afterwards discovered that both parties wanted the divorce, no divorce would be granted. He thought that a most absurd law. It seemed to him that if two persons wanted to be married let them be married, and if two persons wanted to be divorced, let them be divorced. Why should we spend this £6,000 per annum in trying to find out whether the two parties in a divorce wanted the divorce, and if they did, reuniting them again in holy wedlock? He knew it was the law; but he objected to an expenditure of £6,000 a year in carrying out a ridiculous law, and a harsh and unwise law.

MR. HANBURY said, he should like to ask whether, as a matter of fact, the Crown did not win the cordite case, and whether, therefore, this £6,000 for expert witnesses did not represent the entire of the amount paid to them, as the ordinary expenses were paid by the losing side?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) asked when Parliament would get a distinct statement as to the amounts received by the Law Officers of the Crown under the new arrangement? There was considerable anxiety on that point both inside and outside the House. He did not begrudge the hon. and learned Gentleman the full benefit of the arrangement between himself and the State. The hon. and learned Gentleman was entitled to take the full benefit of it, but he (Mr. Williams) was anxious to know the net result of the arrangement and when it would be made known to Parliament.

*SIR C. RUSSELL said that, in answer to the hon. Member for Preston, he desired to say that a short time ago an exact statement was made as to the amounts received by the Attorney General and the Solicitor General respectively, and further particulars would appear in the Appropriation Account; but the remuneration of the Law Officers did not arise in a direct sense upon this Vote. It was quite true there was a considerable increase in the Vote, but the increase was nothing like the 60 per cent. which had been referred to. According to a statement furnished to him by the Treasury the Estimate was based

upon the average of the expenditure for the previous three years, and in this period there had been a number of important criminal prosecutions of long duration and involving great expense. Amongst them were the Hansard prosecution, the Portsea Island prosecution, cases arising out of the Liberator frauds, and some other important prosecutions. As regarded these proceedings, he was not able to give the hon. Member for Preston a division between the costs of agents and fees to counsel. In regard to the costs for expert witnesses under Sub-head C, the hon. Member was under a misapprehension as to the cordite case. The amount stated was a total which would be reduced by the sum to be received from the unsuccessful litigants when the costs were taxed if the decision stood.

MR. HANBURY: This amount is the total?

*SIR C. RUSSELL: Yes. He would remind the hon. Member that the amount represented not merely the amount of remuneration for witnesses for 12 days' attendance, but also for examination and research and experiments long before the trial itself came on. He agreed that expert witnesses were an expensive luxury. These witnesses had included some most eminent men. There was Sir F. Bramwell, Sir Andrew Nobel, Dr. Armstrong, and others, whose evidence was considered by the advisers of the Crown necessary for the purposes of the trial. As to whether Sir F. Abel and Professor Dewar were on the list of paid expert witnesses, he could not say, but he believed they were. He saw no reason why they should not be. They had no interest in the matter, and they were entitled to be paid properly. He was told that as yet they had made no claim. With regard to the observations of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) and the Law of Divorce, no doubt if the law were as the hon. Member wished it to be, the interventions of the Queen's Proctor would be less frequent; but under the law as it stood, if the Queen's Proctor received information that a divorce had been obtained by collusion, or by a suppression of material matters that ought to have been brought before the Court, it was his duty to submit the facts to the Law Officers of the day, and to see that the attention of the Court was drawn to them. He agreed

with the hon. Member for Donegal that it was in the highest degree unsatisfactory that clerks to Magistrates should be interested in prosecutions, but the matter did not come directly under this Vote.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, the hon. and learned Gentleman had questioned the accuracy of his statement as to there being an increase of 60 per cent. in the Vote—

SIR C. RUSSELL (interrupting): I withdraw that.

*SIR R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, it was important the House should clearly understand the position of the matter with respect to the cordite action. It was absolutely essential to call a very considerable number of expert witnesses—some 10 or 12. With respect to the position of Sir Frederick Abel and Professor Dewar, he did not know whether they had made any claim for remuneration, but he would point out that Her Majesty's Government had no claim upon them except from the fact that they had been members of the Explosives Committee which sat in 1889 or 1890, and the question as to whether or not the Government had infringed Nobel's patent in the matter of cordite referred to 1891 and the succeeding years down to the present time. Sir Frederick Abel had ceased for some years to be in the service of the Government, and was now in the honoured position of Secretary to the Imperial Institute, and Professor Dewar had never been in the service of the Government, except that he had from time to time been consulted by them. He was a Professor of the University of Cambridge and of the Royal Institution. If these gentlemen made a legitimate charge for their services he did not see on what ground it could be disputed. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Donegal as to Magistrates' clerks being interested at times in the prosecution of persons who might be tried before the Magistrates, the subject had been considered by successive Law Officers and Governments, and although no one could deny that it was desirable that the same rule should apply in the case of clerks to County Magistrates as those which applied in the case of Borough Magistrates—namely, that they should not be concerned, directly or indirectly, through partners or otherwise,

in cases which came before the Bench with which they were connected, still it was found that there were many practical difficulties in the way of a change, difficulties which did not appear at first sight, and which would make it doubtful whether a change would be in the public interest. In the remoter parts of England and Wales it would be impossible to obtain competent legal advice—and the Magistrates had to rely in many cases upon the guidance of their clerks—if the proposed change were effected. Wishing the change to be made, yet it was impossible to make it, having due regard to the efficiency of the administration of public justice. It would involve great expense, it could not be effected without legislation, and it would certainly be of a very doubtful character. Before any alteration were made the whole subject should be carefully considered.

DR. CLARK said, he would not oppose the Vote, because he understood that no claim had been made by Sir F. Abel and Professor Dewar——

SIR C. RUSSELL: I said that up to the present time no claim had been made.

DR. CLARK said, that when they did make a claim he would divide the House against the payment. As a matter of fact, the Government in the cordite case had been fighting in the interests of these two gentlemen. These gentlemen—who, by the way, had been on the Explosives Committee, and had availed themselves of the information they had obtained as such—had really been defending themselves. If the Government had been unsuccessful their patents would have gone, not only in this country, but abroad, and they would have lost all their royalties.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, they ought not in any way either to sanction the conduct of these two gentlemen, or pay public money to them. He therefore agreed with the hon. Member (Dr. Clark) that this matter must be watched. He did not think the conduct of these gentlemen was what it ought to be. The information printed in the Papers with reference to these matters was insufficient to allow the Vote to be properly discussed. There was a 60 per cent. increase on the £41,000 mentioned in the original Estimate for these three items, and there could be no doubt about the fact that the

law expenses of the country, not only in these but in other Departments, were continually increasing. The fact was, that the fees paid to barristers by the Government were much too high. The work could be done just as well if the Government employed ordinary barristers instead of confining their briefs to a few distinguished counsel and paying them very large fees. The Government in this matter set a bad example to the country, the result being that law expenses were always heavy. He trusted that the present Radical Government would see if they could not in the future bring about a reduction in these items instead of an increase. He was willing to give the Attorney General a little more rope, but the time would come when the democracy of the country would say that they would not have the taxes wasted in the manner in which they were being wasted at present.

Vote agreed to.

6. £10, Supplementary County Courts.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, this was not merely a question of £10. That was the way it was put in the Vote, and he had always objected to that method of dealing with it. The real expenditure was over £400,000. He must object to the Vote, because he believed the County Court business to be badly managed by the Government. In the City of London they were not particularly fond of economy; but they managed their County Court business in such a way that, though they paid higher salaries than the Government, they made a profit, whereas the Government made a loss. Surely the Government should be able to manage the County Courts as well as a Municipality. If they handed them over to the Municipalities a saving might be effected. He desired to know why there was an increase of £200 in the item for the conveyance of persons to prison? He did not think there ought to be any conveyance to prison at all in connection with debt.

SIR C. RUSSELL said, that if the City made a profit out of County Court business it was at the expense of suitors.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, the charges to suitors in the City were the same as in other parts of the country.

SIR C. RUSSELL said, the charges in connection with County Courts were not in the discretion of the Government, but were fixed by Act of Parliament; and as to the increase in the charge for the conveyance of prisoners, he presumed that it was in consequence of there having been more prisoners to convey.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he had said nothing about fees. It was the expenditure, not the receipts, he was talking about. The fees were the same in the City of London as elsewhere.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, the real sum in question was near £500,000. The Comptroller and Auditor General had already brought before the attention of the House on his Report of the 15th January the fact that in many Services for which they were called on to vote the sum put down in the Estimates was a perfectly illusory sum—that, as a matter of fact, the sum voted bore no relation whatever to the amount expended, and that as a consequence the amount expended was entirely withdrawn from the cognisance of the House. Under the pretext of voting £10 they were really dealing with a sum of £427,000, though they had no control over the expenditure whatever. What did it represent? Why, salaries, printing, stationery, registrars, postage, conveyance, incidental expenses, and so forth, of the County Courts—Courts which, he ventured to think, were the most important of all the Courts in the country, for they were the poor man's Courts. They were very subject indeed to abuse. The Registrars were liable to overcharge and make little arrangements—to adopt tricks and devices whereby when payments were made they were considered not to be formal or in order, the fees being allowed to run on. Many a poor man was subjected to serious oppression in consequence of charges of this kind. It seemed to him that of almost all the cases of abuse brought before them this was the last they should allow to pass without protest. The Comptroller and Auditor General had called attention to these sums that were withdrawn from the cognisance of the House. He (Mr. Bowles) himself had appealed to the

Chancellor of the Exchequer to put into the Appropriation Account £8,000,000 of which this £400,000 was part, and really they ought to have a promise of an improved practice in the future in regard to this money. Votes of this kind turned the financial proceedings of the House into a farce. He should like to hear what there was to be said in defence of this monstrous and even wicked system of dealing with the expenditure of the country.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he wished to say a word not so much on the Estimate as on the statement the hon. Member for King's Lynn had just made, which was a matter of serious moment. He understood the hon. Member to say that the Registrars of County Courts made overcharges and were guilty of abuses and dishonourable conduct in their office.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he must have explained himself in an unfortunate manner. What he meant to say was that the Registrars were only human beings, and were consequently liable to make overcharges. He thought it extremely likely that they did make overcharges, inasmuch as they were withdrawn from the cognisance of the House.

*SIR A. ROLLIT said that, having been a Registrar himself, he thought it extremely unlikely that they would do anything of the kind. The Registrars were admitted solicitors, and if they were guilty of the practices suggested by the hon. Member they would be struck off the Roll, and would richly deserve all they got. Their accounts were audited periodically, and if they were persons likely to do these things—which they were not—they assuredly would not have the opportunity. He could not accept the hypothetical way in which the statement was made. It had reference to a body of men who had charge of large funds; and if there was a suspicion of their being justly open to a charge of such an abuse of their position as the hon. Member suggested, it would be a standing danger to the administration of justice. The first statement of the hon. Member was absolutely incredible, and the second statement, he ventured to think, ought never to have been made without citing cases in its justification,

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT was understood to say it was quite impossible for what the hon. Member for King's Lynn had mentioned to have happened in reference to charging fees. It was quite impossible for any County Court officials or other persons to have taken such advantage. All the fees were on a certain fixed scale—accessible to everybody. In the original Vote there was full opportunity of revising every halfpenny of the expenditure under this head. Then the amount received was almost equal to the amount expended. The Supplementary Estimate had been rendered necessary because the number of complaints presented during the past year had exceeded expectation, and the salaries of the Registrars varied with the number of the complaints received. The system was thoroughly workable; and though the hon. Member had pointed to him as the culprit, he was not afraid to stand up before the House and defend it. The whole matter, of course, was open to criticism when brought forward before the House of Commons; but he ventured to say that the whole system which had now been in force for many years was advantageous to the public, and that the fullest means of information was open to everyone who applied for it.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University) said, he was glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman approved of the system of placing these Estimates before Parliament. A few years ago the late Government was attacked by a Member of the present Government for adopting that very system of appropriation which the right hon. Gentleman now told them worked so admirably.

MAJOR RASCH said, that he had received complaints from his constituents as to the extraordinary charges forced upon them. He would not say that they in particular were treated unfairly, but he thought his hon. Friend's experience was the exception which proved the rule. People were under the impression that this was done because it was thought they had no friends in the matter and that there was no remedy.

*SIR C. RUSSELL pointed out that it was the hon. Member's duty to bring forward any cases of the kind which he could authenticate in order that they might be thoroughly investigated.

MR. HANBURY said, this matter was well worth the consideration of the House. He urged that the system of appropriations-in-aid should not be carried further until the question had come before the Public Accounts Committee. The Auditor and Comptroller General in his Report called attention to the fact that the division of the Votes into sub-heads had no effect, the appropriation of the money voted being governed by the Appropriation Bill. Care should be taken that the system was not extended, for the Auditor and Comptroller General was much afraid that it would extend to the whole of the Civil Service Estimates.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: There is no fear of that.

MR. HANBURY would make another suggestion. As the Auditor and Comptroller General did not assign the appropriations-in-aid to the different purposes for which they were voted, it was possible to transfer Votes for one purpose to another without even the Treasury being consulted. That ought to be checked, and the Auditor and Comptroller General suggested a remedy. In dealing with Departments for which only a nominal sum was voted, though large sums were actually spent, the Appropriation Bill ought to assign the money voted to the various heads on which it was to be spent, thus supplying the defects of the Estimates. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would promise to follow the recommendation of the Auditor and Comptroller General at once in the next Appropriation Bill.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he would take the matter into consideration, but he could not promise that the plan suggested would be adopted in the next Appropriation Bill.

SIR J. GORST said, that it was a mistake to suppose that the Auditor and Comptroller General had censured the present practice. He simply pointed out that it would be desirable to have Parliamentary sanction—which he could not find—for the present excellent system of appropriation.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES did not see how sanction could have been given, because this was the first year in which it had been done. The Auditor and Comptroller General said in his Report that under the power conferred by the second section of the Act the practice of paying

receipts hitherto appropriated as payments in aid had this year been extended to 39 of the Votes. It was upon that extension that he based his suggestion that it would be more proper to make the appropriation. They were dealing now not with strict appropriations but with appropriations in aid; and the result had been that £8,000,000 had been appropriated not under the Appropriation Act at all, but by Treasury Minute, which it should not be. It was impossible to read the Report of the Auditor and Controller General without seeing that he censured that practice.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he had always opposed this system as a bad way of dealing with the accounts, and the last Government when in Office always objected to this system of appropriation. He should certainly expect the support of Her Majesty's Government in objecting to it.

DR. CLARK knew from experience that the Edinburgh Office more than paid its cost in stamps and was a gain instead of a loss. On the other hand, in the case of these County Courts they were losing money. What should be done was to put in appropriations-in-aid, if necessary for all of them. While in one case the fees came to much less than the cost, in another considerable profit was made.

SIR J. GORST said, the practice had been going on for many years past. It originated in a suggestion of the Auditor and Comptroller General that the Civil Service Estimates should be gradually and steadily approximated to those of the Army and Navy. Since that time these exchanges, by turning receipts into appropriations-in-aid, had been steadily progressing in regard to the Civil Service Estimates being applied to fresh items from year to year. All that the Auditor and Comptroller General said was that it was necessary the matter should be examined into by Parliament, but the practice should be continued under the sanction of the House.

Vote agreed to.

7. £1,300, Supplementary Register House, Edinburgh, agreed to.

CLASS IV.

8. £207,864, Supplementary, Public Education.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, in reference to the grants-in-aid, in the case of some of these schools the managers had sent out circulars to the parents of the children asking for subscriptions in lieu of fees. He did not say that was illegal, but a feeling was aroused in people's minds that some sort of pressure was being used to compel even parents who paid fees to give subscriptions under threat of some kind that unless they gave money their children would not receive the same advantages as others. Unfortunately, the moment any question was raised the parties interested denied all knowledge and were careful enough to leave no proof behind them. What did the right hon. Gentleman think of such practices, and had he ever heard anything in the nature of threats or undue pressure being put on the parents of children? If he found himself in a position to condemn the practice it would have a good effect upon school managers and prevent them using such threats in future.

*MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) said, the Committee would not grudge any extra expenditure for elementary education, but it would grudge any increase in the expenditure which was only caused by the worrying of those who carried on the elementary education of the country. The first item of this Vote included the salaries of an increased staff of officials, who had become a necessity owing to the increase of the amount of work to be got through. Some of the gentlemen in the Education Department would not have felt this increase of work so heavily if they had not been directed to spend their time in putting upon the managers of schools requirements which were unreasonable—if not in themselves, at least in the mode of their application. What he was about to say did not apply exclusively to voluntary schools. Those requirements were imposed just as much upon the Board schools as they were upon the voluntary schools, and therefore in saying this he was urging the case of the one as well as of the other. He was fully aware that the present was not the best time to raise such an im-

portant question as this, but he felt he could not take too early an opportunity to bring forward certain grievances which he wished to urge upon the attention of the Committee. Was it under the sanction of the Vice President of the Council that these measures were allowed, and, if so, were not he and the Department straining their power if the Department should refuse to pay a grant which had been legitimately earned because certain requirements made after these grants had been earned had not been carried out? He would only ask the attention of the Committee now to two special cases. The first one was that of the National school at Luton. There the allegation was that the grant for the year ending September 30 last had been kept back pending the submission of plans for certain improvements. It was said that the payment was delayed because the sanitary conditions of the school were not satisfactory, and because the managers had not carried out certain alterations which they had been called upon to make. He could quite understand that it was proper to bring strong pressure to bear upon managers, if that were the only way to secure the sanitary condition of the schools being kept up to the standard required. At the same time, however, the pressure used must be a legitimate one, and, in the present case, in his opinion, that was not the case. If the Department were to say to the managers of a particular school, "Unless such and such alterations are carried out by you, we shall not give you another grant," well and good, for in that case the Department would be acting fairly. But to withhold a grant already earned because something, which was mentioned for the first time after the grant had been earned, was not done, was, he contended, most unjust. In the case of this school, the Annual Report for the year 1892 did not refer to any sanitary defects in the building which required attention. No notice was then given of the required improvements until November, 1893, yet the grant had been withheld from September until January of the present year. The other case was that of the school at Christchurch, Hants. There the Government had suspended the grant because the scheme for certain alterations then considered necessary by the Department had not been submitted for their

approval, and so it might actually happen that the salaries which had been earned by the school teachers would have to be kept back because those alterations which had only been suggested had not been submitted for the approval of the Department. These grievances might be very small in actual monetary figures, but he could assure hon. Members that it was a very serious matter to many of those who were directly concerned; and it was the more annoying because it was a difficulty which could be easily remedied by a little care. It was the business of the House to see that these stretches of Departmental authority should not be allowed to continue. Of course, there might be parallel cases among the teachers engaged in the Board schools. The Department had no more right to withhold these grants from the schools than that House would have a right to withhold the salary of a Minister who might have incurred a Vote of Censure after his year of Office was completed. This was not a matter which had been going on for any long period in the Department, and he felt certain that the House of Commons would censure such a practice. He thought the Department should watch more narrowly the tendency of their Inspectors to manufacture grievances. He had always been an advocate of having all schools, whether Board or voluntary, in a state of complete efficiency, but at the same time he thought the requirements of the Department were not always enforced in a reasonable way. The Inspectors sometimes imagined that it was as easy to provide a playground in a crowded town as it was in a country district, and they put upon the managers requirements which, if they were not impossible to carry out, could not be acted upon without the expenditure of a good deal of time. He hoped that an alteration would be made in this respect, so that the great work of education could be carried out with as little friction as possible.

MR. ACLAND: With reference to the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Mr. A. C. Morton), I from time to time receive letters stating that there is a certain amount of pressure placed upon parents in order to induce them to give subscriptions as a substitute for the fees from

which they have been relieved by the Free Education Act. I always say in reply to these letters that some proof must be offered that undue pressure is placed upon children, and I do not recall for a moment any case in which tangible proof of such undue pressure has been given. Of course, parents are perfectly at liberty to pay subscriptions, and unless proof were offered that the children have really suffered in some way I should not be inclined to interfere. With reference to the remarks of the hon. Member for Oxford University (Mr. Talbot), I was glad to see that the question he raised with reference to the grievances of schools respecting the requirements of the Department apply alike to voluntary and Board schools. I can assure him, although I know that a great many places in the country will not believe me, that what I do to secure the sanitary efficiency of schools applies to Nonconformist, Church, and Board schools alike. I do not see how people can imagine that the Department would wish to treat one class of school differently from another. If the Department gave instructions for differential treatment of different schools we should very soon find the carrying out of its work impossible. I am very glad, therefore, that I am not charged with treating one school differently from another. I would like to indicate to the hon. Gentleman what the conditions are upon which grants are made. If he will look at that part of the Code which is headed "Annual Grants—General Conditions" he will see that the Code makes these grants subject to certain conditions, and one of those conditions is that the Department must be satisfied that the school premises are healthy, properly constructed, warmed, and cleaned, and so forth. The grant is in a certain sense forfeited if these conditions are not fulfilled. That is the view the Department has always taken, and they ask for an undertaking that the conditions shall be fulfilled before they pay the grant, which, unless the conditions have been fulfilled, has not really become due. I think that position is entirely justified by the provisions of the Code. I am not familiar with the particular cases that have been mentioned, but I would like to say that we never hang up the grant if the undertaking is given. All we want is a reasonable

pledge, by plan or otherwise, that the requirements are going to be fulfilled, and as soon as we get that we pay the grant as promptly as we can. With reference to playgrounds, I fully recognise that in a great many urban districts—and I am very sorry for it—playgrounds are practically almost impossible. I have just received a Report from one of our best Inspectors, the Rev. G. W. Sharpe, in which he points out the enormous disadvantages which apply to schools that have no playgrounds. There are schools within a mile or two of this place where playgrounds do not exist, and cannot exist. Although much has been said which is thoroughly hostile to what the Department has been trying to do in these matters, I think that, on the whole, although there may be exceptions where the Inspectors have insisted upon fads and not upon essentials, the managers have foreseen that these demands would come, and most of them have willingly risen to the occasion. In one of the last Reports received one of our Inspectors says that he has been invariably received with courtesy and kindness, and that in almost every instance he has found the greatest willingness shown to comply with his requests for the remedying of defects.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said, he could quite understand that in the case of very grave sanitary defects there might be some reason why the Department should withhold the grant until the defect had been made good. When, however, as in the Christchurch case, the grant which had been earned was withheld because a demand was made for the erection of new buildings, he thought the Department were going too far and doing a great injustice to schools. The Department had no right to demand that the plans should be agreed upon before the grant was made. The Department very often made very unreasonable demands, which it was the duty of the managers to resist, and it continually happened that the demands made by the Inspectors were not supported by the head of the Department. He would like to bring another very serious grievance forward, and that was the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman which forbade charges to be made for books. The policy and intention of the

Act of 1891 was that the financial resources of the schools as they then existed should not be interfered with. One mode of raising money was by fees; another was by contributions in regard to books used. The probability was that whenever there were contributions in respect of books the fees were lower. The charges were practically the same. Immediately after the passing of the Act the Department under the government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dartford (Sir W. Hart-Dyke) issued a Circular in which they said that if a school accepted the fee grant its liberty to make a reasonable charge for books would not be interfered with. What was meant by "a reasonable charge for books"? It was possible that the right hon. Gentleman would say that what was meant was charges for the use of books only. They could not have meant that. Charges for the use of books, which, no doubt, were one of the forms in which charges were imposed by schools, had been ruled to be fees. If they were fees they were subject to all the restrictions in the Act of 1891—that was to say, they could not be raised beyond the figure of the determining year. The Department in their Circular said that reasonable charges should not be interfered with, and should not be restricted by the acceptance of the fee grant. If those "reasonable charges" were fees for the use of books, they would be fees, and would be rigidly restricted to the sum they stood at in the determining year. The Department asserted that reasonable charges, not to be interfered with by the acceptance of the fee grant, were not fees, and were to be distinguished from fees. The Department must admit that if, as they had often asserted, charges for the use of books were fees, the charges the Circular referred to were charges for the use of books only. Therefore, there must be other charges in respect of books. He maintained that there were general charges in respect of books, the ordinary form of which was the charge under which the child paid instalments, and, in the end, became the owner of the books altogether. He did not think that could be denied. Every one who read the Act of 1891 must see that the charges referred to in Section 3, which were implicitly permitted, could not have been fees.

Viscount Cranborne

The Department must admit that the charges referred to in the Circular must be charges other than those for the use of books. There was no Article in the Code requiring managers to provide the books; and Article 78 of the Code provided that a child should not be refused admission to a school except for a reasonable cause. The Department were not the supreme judges of what was reasonable; and in a case which was brought into Court the Judge held, in regard to a child who had not brought the usual fee, that he had jurisdiction to decide whether this was or was not a reasonable cause for exclusion. The right hon. Gentleman was driving people to take cases before the Courts; and if he persisted in his course, he would find that the Department were not the supreme judges of what was reasonable, and the Department would find that a great deal of the powers they exercised would be taken away. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman not to persist in his course of injustice, and begged him to look carefully into this matter, and to endeavour to be more reasonable in his treatment of voluntary schools.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, he represented a borough which was the largest in the country having no School Board, and desired to make a few remarks respecting voluntary schools. Considerable pressure had been brought to bear on voluntary schools, and certain reforms had been made which it was thought necessary to be carried out. When those reforms had been carried out by the voluntary schools the right hon. Gentleman himself made certain provisions, and the result was that the schools were screwed up to such an extent that their finances could not possibly last much longer. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that he made the same requirements in respect of all the schools.

MR. ACLAND: What I said was that I made no difference between the various schools.

MR. HANBURY said, he was not drawing any distinction between the different kinds of voluntary schools. He was equally interested in them whether they were Church of England, or Roman Catholic, or Nonconformist schools. From a political point of view, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman

would persist in the course he was following, because in Lancashire there was no better recruiting officer for the Tory Party than the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Education Department. He admitted that every sanitary requirement of a school should be met; they did not complain of that. What they complained of was that they were not only asked to carry out necessary requirements, but to adopt fads of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. ACLAND: What fads? Give some instances.

MR. HANBURY said, there was one case of a Roman Catholic school in Preston where the work was well done and a large grant earned, and through which he was taken by the priest, who told him that even before the requirements of the Department had been carried out the Inspector had spoken in the very highest terms of the school. This was a very poor school, as Roman Catholic schools generally were.

MR. ACLAND: But can you refer to one of the fads?

MR. HANBURY said, one fad was that in a sort of large hall a large number of hat pegs had to be put up for each child's hat and cloak.

MR. ACLAND: You call that a fad?

MR. HANBURY thought so. Looking at it he thought it was unnecessary. In any case, that was the complaint made. When the right hon. Gentleman said that he dealt fairly between the Board schools and the voluntary schools he must be aware that it was a question of finance that was at issue. The Board schools ought not to be used for the purpose of squeezing the voluntary schools out of existence. The pressure which was put upon the latter schools necessitated a large amount of extra expenditure which was not felt by the Board schools, because they could draw upon the rates. If the right hon. Gentleman continued the course he had adopted he would find out what would be the result in Lancashire.

MR. ACLAND said, that hon. Members might rely upon it that so long as he occupied his present position he would do his best to see that schoolrooms were kept in a reasonably healthy condition. Nothing could be more unhealthy or more likely to conduce to infection than

piling children's clothes together in heaps; and it was only reasonable, therefore, to require that each child should have its own hat peg. The voluntary schools received among them some £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 from the State, while the private subscriptions towards their maintenance only amounted to some £750,000. In these circumstances, he did not think that the pressure placed upon the managers to keep the schools in a healthy condition was unreasonable. Most of the complaints of the noble Lord opposite were based upon occurrences that had taken place before his accession to Office, but he could assure him that he did his best to prevent injustice being done.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, he thought he saw an opportunity of settling this matter. If the right hon. Gentleman would consent to use the powers of the Department to declare what charges were reasonable, it would amount to a settlement, because the charges would only be allowed where reasonable.

MR. ACLAND said, these charges were included in the fees. The payment by parents for the use of books that finally became their own property was not in the nature of the payment of fees, but was made in virtue of an arrangement that was entered into between the parents and the managers of the schools. Was it possible to contend that any payment of that sort could be considered a fee? The Auditors and the Public Accounts Committee had very carefully considered the matter, and had come to the conclusion that the contribution of parents could not come under the designation of a fee.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, he wished to refer to the grant for Training Colleges. It so happened that he had that day attended meetings of the Councils of two of the most important—namely, St. John's, Battersea, and the Girls' Training College at Tottenham. He believed it was the general opinion that while, in consequence of changes in the Code, the period of two years was now for a short time to be limited to 18 months, the curriculum should remain the same, but the examinations should be made somewhat less severe. That was the wish of the Councils of these Institutions, and he hoped his right hon Friend would give it some con-

sideration. The next point he wished to refer to was the statements made by the hon. Member for Preston. They who were the friends of voluntary schools agreed that they ought to be reasonably healthy, and they wanted to do all they could to meet these provisions of the Department. But there was such a thing as over-doing sanitary regulations. The requirements of the Department ought not to be vexatious or pedantic. There must be some discretion exercised by the Inspectors, and the right hon. Gentleman ought not to rely entirely upon their *ipse dixit*. He saw a case reported in *The Guardian* newspaper the other day in which the Inspector had directed that the doors of a school should all be made to open outwards. It might be desirable that the doors of all public buildings in this country should be made to open outwards, but to arbitrarily make a regulation of that kind in respect to schools amounted almost to tyranny. The Police and Sanitary Committee had made a provision that in some towns all future buildings should be provided with doors opening outwards, but they had not gone so far as to say that the alteration must be made in the case of existing buildings. When experience showed that a school was, on the whole, in a good sanitary condition, pedantic insistence should not be laid upon slight technical defects. Infinite distress was caused by such demands.

MR. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) said, he only rose for the purpose of emphasizing the statements which had been made by his hon. Friend the Member for Preston, the more so because he thought the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President had hardly appreciated the ground of their complaint. He would not go into the question as to whether the requirements made were reasonable or were only fads, but he did say that it was a hard thing in the case of a school which had started the year well, and earned its grant, that an Inspector should go down and say that unless further requirements were fulfilled the grant would be withheld. He did not hesitate to say that some restriction ought to be placed upon a proceeding of that kind. If the Department were to say, "We give notice that unless these requirements are fulfilled next year we shall not give the grant," then there

would be no complaint. [Mr. ACLAND: That is precisely what we do.] But he could give cases where the grant already earned had been withheld until the managers had promised to fulfil certain new requirements. The right hon. Gentleman might have made no distinction between the voluntary and the Board schools in this matter; but if, as he said, he did not wish to crush out voluntary schools, he could not appreciate the difference between the two cases. The managers of voluntary schools had no rates to go upon, and the School Boards had unlimited powers of borrowing and rating. He knew a case where, the grant having been withheld, the managers had to give their personal guarantee to the bank for an advance to pay the teacher's salary. These managers were doing excellent service to education; but if such responsibility were thrown upon them, many would withdraw their support from the voluntary schools altogether. He trusted that in future the right hon. Gentleman would see that new demands were not made upon managers without timely notice being given and full opportunity for obtaining reasonable modifications of those demands.

*MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he desired to add his voice to those of his hon. Friends in urging upon the Vice President the desirability of showing a little more latitude in dealing with the requirements of voluntary schools, because there was no doubt that the feeling throughout the country was that he was dealing with voluntary schools in an exceptionally hard way. If in the way he had acted he had only been following the course of his predecessor he did not see how this impression could have got abroad. It was very hard for the managers of a school, which perhaps had been built but a few years since in accordance with the then requirements of the Department, to be suddenly confronted with further demands upon their resources. He knew of demands of that kind being suddenly made, such as for cloak-rooms, without allowing any adequate time to raise the necessary funds. The threat of withholding the grant made it all the more difficult to carry out the alterations which were demanded, and it must be borne in mind that the demand made might be one which the right hon.

Gentleman himself would not consider requisite. A demand was made, in the first instance, simply on the *ipse dixit* of the School Inspector, and it was frequently found that all that was required might be done at much less cost and in a much simpler way than was suggested by the Inspector. He (Mr. Tomlinson) contended that no grant ought to be withheld until the case had been brought before the Vice-President himself. He did not desire to affirm that the right hon. Gentleman acted with the intention of exceptionally harassing the voluntary schools, and he trusted it would be found, after the discussion that had now taken place, that the work of the Department would be carried out with greater care and less harshness.

Mr. W. SIDEBOTTOM (Derbyshire, High Peak) said, he did not rise to prolong the Debate, but merely to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to some of the fads he challenged the hon. Member for Preston to name. He did not mean the fads of the right hon. Gentleman, but those of some of his subordinates. One of the fads alluded to was the cloak-rooms. In many cases they were not useful places, being three outside walls without any sufficient heating apparatus, so that when the children's clothes were hung up—if a wet day they were put on again after school in a more wet condition than when they were first taken off. Such places were certainly not proper places in which to place the clothing of children while the children were at work. Then it appeared to him to be a great fad to insist in a mixed school that there should be separate cloak-rooms for the boys and girls. To him this appeared to be wholly unnecessary in a mixed school. Then with regard to the lavatories in connection with the schools, as a rule they should be placed at a certain distance from the main building, which could be easily accomplished in country districts, though it would, he admitted, be more difficult in large towns and populous places. Another fad was that with regard to ventilation. He had been in many of the schools as a manager, and had found a fearful draught which, instead of being beneficial, had, in many cases, given the children severe colds. To the masters and mistresses it might not be an inconvenience; but to the children,

many of whom had to work in hot factories, it was very detrimental, and he thought that these were all fads that might well receive the attention of the Department, but he should not have mentioned them if it had not been for the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman to name the fads.

MR. ACLAND said, he had first to allude to the speech of the hon. Member for Wigan (Sir F. S. Powell), who referred to the Training Colleges. He might say that he had had a letter from the head of the admirable College at Aberystwith asking him to arrange to meet a small body of principals and others interested in education to talk over some of the points alluded to. He could assure the hon. Member he took the greatest possible interest in all their Training Colleges, and would do his best to meet the views of those directly interested in these Institutions. The hon. Member added some words that had been re-echoed by the Member for Suffolk, by one of the Members for Preston, and the Member for Derbyshire who had just spoken, warning him against what was called the "fad" methods of trying to deal with the healthy condition of the schools. He might say that the *ipse dixit* of the Inspector alone was not the only thing that guided them in their action. He quite admitted that occasionally there were demands made which might not always be adapted to the particular case in view, particularly in connection with country schools, but the hon. Member for Derbyshire (Mr. W. Sidebottom) would agree with him that in many of the towns they could hardly be too careful in many of these matters. With reference to what the Member for Suffolk said, he agreed with him that in the main what they wanted was to give fair warning of these demands; but he might say that where they acted most stringently was, as a rule, where their warnings had been neglected. There were many schools where the 12 months' warning produced no effect whatever. When nothing was done the hon. Member would agree with him that they must use the only power they had—that of postponing the grant. But he assured the hon. Member he would have this particular question of postponing the grant carefully looked into. He was also glad to say that he agreed with the noble

Lord the Member for Rochester (Lord Cranborne), and these cases would now be in the quarterly list. He had now dealt in the main with all the questions put to him.

Vote agreed to.

9. £16,000, Supplementary, Science and Art Department, agreed to.

CLASS V.

10. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £27,500, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1894, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad."

DR. CLARK said, he thought the Government ought to have given them the Report on the Uganda Commission so that they could have had the Debate on this Vote now. For some reason or other the Government were concealing it, but he understood that a pledge had been given, and if that was carried out they would have a full day given to them after Easter to discuss the question. He would not discuss the question that night, but would vote against it. A number of them had changed their position since the Vote was last before them, but he hoped they had not changed their minds. He did not intend to discuss any of the points until he saw the proposal made, but he might say a word or two from the economist's standpoint. Here there was an increase of about 60 per cent. The Government having given them a free hand they had been very free with the money, and the Treasury had allowed them to do as they pleased. He did not think the present Government were responsible for the two African Companies, but they were as favourable to them as their predecessors, and made things as easy as they could at the expense of the British taxpayer. On the ground that the money was not wanted and ought never to have been spent he should vote against it.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he understood they were to have a night to discuss this question later on; therefore, he agreed they should not to-night take up the time of the Committee in discussing this Vote, but there was a matter connected with it which he did not understand. When the £12,000 was voted

last Session it was an honourable understanding, he thought, that it was to cover the whole of the expenditure for this financial year—that it was the whole expenditure they would be put to until they got the Report and had an opportunity of discussing the matter in the House. They now found, however, that the amount was to be increased by £27,500, altogether making very nearly £40,000 preliminary expenses, instead of the £12,000 they understood was to cover the inquiry. He dared say they would be told it also covered other expenses in connection with Uganda, but they were expenses which had nothing to do with the question for which the taxpayers had to pay; and when they were told the whole expense would only be £12,000, it showed it was a very bad way of estimating the cost, and a most objectionable system of dealing with public money. They ought to have had some better explanation when they debated this matter 12 months ago; they ought to have been told they were going to buy a lot of stores of which they knew nothing, not even what they were at the present moment. There were many ways in this country by which the money might be spent more satisfactorily. There were all sorts of demands from the working classes and the agricultural classes. They refused to grant them money at a low rate of interest, but they could take the taxpayers' money and spend it for the benefit of these Chartered Companies. That was where the matter hinged. This was got up by a Chartered Company; they were drawn into it and asked to buy their stores, and take over matters in connection with their Company. All that was wrong. If the taxpayers of this country could afford to throw away their money by £40,000 at a time surely it would be better and wiser to give it to the poor people of this country—to give it by way of assisting the people of this country to better their condition. He must complain that they had not had the Report yet, though it had been in this country for some months. He did not know whether there was any disagreement over the matter; but if there was, he hoped the Jingo spirit of the Government had not been successful. The new Prime Minister was understood to be in favour of a spirited foreign policy. In such a

policy he warned him that he would not be supported by the Radical Party in this House and their supporters throughout the country. They did not want a spirited foreign policy. They did not want to bolster up the British East Africa Company, and like companies. It was bad enough that these companies should plunder and rob this country through their share lists, but they might fairly object that public money should also be got hold of for the benefit directly or indirectly of these plundering companies. That was very strong language, and if he could find stronger language in regard to these companies he should be glad to use it. Nothing could be worse than these companies, from the Liberator downwards; they were all pretty much on a level. He thought the Government had acted very unwisely in committing them to this large expenditure without first asking their consent. Their consent ought to be obtained before the money was spent, and not afterwards, because it was all nonsense to say they had any proper control over the money after it was spent, and that was another reason why he objected to this Vote. He had not gone into the Uganda Question, as he believed they were to have an opportunity later on to discuss it; but if his hon. Friend went to a Division he should vote with him, for the purpose of protesting against this very bad system.

*MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) said, the hon. Member who had just sat down had spoken of the East Africa Company as a plundering company. He was afraid the hon. Member had not given much attention to the recent negotiations that had been going on between the Government and the company, otherwise he might have thought the epithet should have been applied to the other party, and not to the company. The hon. Member objected to pay for stores he had not an opportunity of examining. He was sure the Government and the whole House would be ready to give the hon. Member the opportunity of examining those stores if he would go to Uganda for that purpose. But he did not rise to oppose this Vote in any way. Last year when this Vote was brought forward the Opposition

stated they did not consider it in the least necessary to send Sir Gerald Portal to make the inquiry in Uganda; but as the Government decided upon that course of action the Opposition did not feel called on to dissent from it, in view of the expression of the Government that they had not sufficient information before them. As this Vote is in connection with the expenses of Sir Gerald Portal's Mission, it would be the duty of the Opposition on this occasion, as on recent occasions, to support the Government against their own followers.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) said, that all he desired to do was to warn the Government that in the event of their deciding on the policy of evacuating Uganda the Anti-Slavery Society, and those who took an interest in the diminution of slavery, would deem it their duty probably to oppose the Government, as they believed the policy of evacuation would encourage the Slave Trade. And if the Government proposed to extend the jurisdiction of the Sultan of Zanzibar over the district of Uganda the Anti-Slavery Society would also feel disposed to take a similar course, because it would be placing the Uganda district under the operation of Mahomedan law, and denying the right of protection to those inhabiting a British Protectorate.

MR. LABOUCHERE desired to say, in reference to the remarks of the last speaker, that if the Government did insist upon taking over Uganda there were several gentlemen who felt as strongly against slavery as his hon. Friend who would feel it their duty to oppose the action of the Government. Their views were so very ably and exhaustively stated by the right hon. Gentlemen who were now sitting on the Treasury Bench when they sat on the Opposition Bench a few years ago that it was unnecessary to re-state them. He believed that the Government had taken the Soudanese into their pay, and a good deal of this money had gone for the Soudanese who were acting as the British Guard. He had strongly opposed the expedition to Uganda. He thought it was a waste of money, and he was sorry they ever went there at all. The thing, however, had been done; and the British Flag having been raised there, if it was absolutely necessary that some action

should be taken, he did hope that we should not assume all responsibility there, but that we should hand over Uganda to the Zanzibar Protectorate, which came, in a secondary way, under our Protectorate, at the same time taking care that we did not increase in any sort of way the slavery that existed in that country. He thought, indeed, they ought to go further, and, having established a Zanzibar Protectorate, ought to do something with a view to lessening the amount of slavery which existed there. He did not know why they had not yet got Sir Gerald Portal's Report, because it was impossible to discuss the whole case until they had such Report.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) desired to express his sympathy with the warning addressed to the Government by the hon. Member for Darlington. He would like to add to that warning what he feared would not have the sympathy of the hon. Member for Northampton, and that was that if Uganda should be evacuated there would be the greatest anxiety amongst that important class of their countrymen who were interested in Protestant missions. These religious missions were supported by a very influential body of opinion and amongst some of the very best classes of the British population. He spoke with confidence when he said that these Missionary Organisations regarded with great anxiety the decision at which Her Majesty's Government might arrive with reference to this important territory. Need he recall to the recollection of the Government the powerful agitation which was set on foot two years ago largely at the instance of these meritorious Organisations? He did not doubt that if a halting or retrograde policy were adopted by the Government now there might be a renewal of that agitation. Considering the great confidence that was expressed in the administration of the Foreign Department at that time, and considering that the noble Lord who was then Foreign Minister was now the head of the Government, they naturally felt great hope in his future conduct of affairs in this as in all other portions of the British Empire. He would venture to add another warning, and it was this—if there should be anything like an evacuation of Uganda, would not the

door be opened to some Foreign Power to enter there? ["Yes!"] If that was to be the case, then there would be a great agitation among all those who were interested in the defence of the Empire, and to whom Imperial interests were dear. As for making this territory over to Zanzibar, that would be a step greatly for the worse. That would induce a fresh Mahomedan complication. Already one of the difficulties there was the existence of large sections of the Mahomedan religion, and with that particular religion there arose the dissensions of the various denominations. What with the existing trouble with the Mahomedans, what with the complications of the Soudanese, many of whom were Mahomedans, and the introduction of a Mahomedan Power on the shores of the Great Lakes, there would be a political complication of a very extraordinary character, perfectly gratuitous, answering no practical or political purpose, and apparently adopted for no other reason but the hesitation to assume that responsibility which belonged to England. If there was to be peace kept between the various contending religious sects; if there was to be that harmony which ought to exist between them, such a happy situation of affairs could best be secured by the presence of British officers under the control, at all events, of a British superior. A British Commissioner or Plenipotentiary would be far more conducive to the peace of Uganda than any Mahomedan Power, including that of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

COLONEL NOLAN desired to know what was to be the position of the Catholics, who were getting on very well and had a moderate amount of arms, with which they did not kill anybody, when British officers went there and the Catholics were deprived of their arms? He believed they had been fairly treated since the arrival of Sir Gerald Portal; but their arms had not been restored to them, and if they were left there unarmed and unprotected they would be at the mercy of Mahomedans, who had imbibed as much of the Koran as told them to kill anybody who stood in their way. If the Government were going to leave Uganda, in what position were they going to leave the Catholics? They had taken from them their arms, and left them ex-

posed to the Mussulmen, who had been brought down from all sides.

*MR. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, he understood from the earlier speeches that it was not intended to go into the question of the occupation of Uganda. He rose now to say he felt it his duty to vote with his hon. Friend the Member for Caithness on this question, because he thought it was hard to bring one's mind to sanctioning the spending of money for what was going on in Uganda. He wanted to draw the attention of the Committee to the last two speeches. The hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston rose to defend the Protestant religionists in that territory and to claim English protection and interference on their account; and the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite had asked for the same protection for his Catholic co-religionists. The argument appeared to be that because these respective sects of Christians, both of whom were aiming at occupying the same paradise and arriving there by pretty much the same means, could not agree with one another, that they must have English officers and guns to keep the peace between them. This was, to him, an additional reason why the gospel of war and of occupation should not be preached to these quarrelling Christians. One was tempted to exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!"

SIR R. TEMPLE desired to say that nothing was further from his intention, and he was sure from that of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, than to say they wanted to obtain protection to prevent Christians killing one another. It was to protect Christians of all denominations from the native tribes, whether Mahomedan or native.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) thought the moral to be drawn from this Debate was that the extraordinary delay of the Government was altogether most disastrous. For many a long year the matter had been before them, for many a long month the matter had been very closely brought home to Her Majesty's Ministers. He did not think there was any real occasion to send Sir Gerald Portal for information. They had all the facts necessary. The House had been promised a Debate after Easter, and he hoped it would not be de-

layed. If the hon. Member for Caithness had had a little more time to consider the exact facts he would not have spoken so hardly of the operations of the East Africa Company.

DR. CLARK said, they could not know the exact facts until they saw Sir Gerald Portal's Report.

MR. LAWRENCE was surprised that the hon. Member should have criticised a company when he knew so very little of it. It would be very hard upon the company and on the people who lived in the district and had done so much to advance it if the Debate were postponed until near Whitsuntide, and he hoped, therefore, that it would be soon after Easter. The interests of individuals living in the district were seriously jeopardised; and so were the interests of this country. He had just heard that the King of the Belgians had established a station in the Nile Valley, and he would ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he had any information how far foreign nations were trespassing on our sphere of action and were doing a great deal to prejudice the future of a country that they had taken under their protection?

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, he could not imagine a more unjust and outrageous attack than that which the hon. Member for Shipley had just made on the efforts of the East Africa Company and those who had done such good work in Uganda. It was well-known that Captain Lugard, and others who represented the interests of civilisation and of order in that country, had succeeded not in promoting war and strife, as the hon. Member implied, but in preventing war, and in largely putting an end to those slave raids which had inflicted such injury and ruin on that part of Africa. This was a very grave question of the future. Many grave questions, which were not apparent to the hon. Member, were raised by the fate of Uganda. At this moment in the North of Africa British influence, British administration, and British civilisation were predominant in Egypt. In the South likewise the influence of the British power was extending rapidly northwards. Already it reached from Cape Town to the Zambesi, and even north of that

river, over Nyassaland. Comparatively small districts now intervened between the regions in the North and in the South which already were under British power and civilisation. Other nations, as they knew, were making great efforts to obtain control of the upper regions of the Nile just North of Uganda, and to interpose between the advancing forces of Great Britain. The French and Belgians both were at this moment sending strong expeditions into the Equatorial Provinces of the Soudan. An opportunity now offered for the extension and development of British influence and commerce in those regions, which was probably without parallel in the history of Africa. If this critical opportunity were not lost, we might very soon learn with pride that the whole vast region from Alexandria to Cape Town was under British hegemony. Any Member of this House who from pseudo-humanitarian motives would compel the natives of Uganda to continue in the internecine conflicts in which they had been engaged for so many years, and would prevent British influence and power from restoring order, and peace, and civilisation to those regions, and who would also close those regions which offered great openings to our stagnating commerce, was not only doing his utmost to deal a blow to the true interests of civilisation, but also doing his utmost to injure the commercial prosperity of his country. He (Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett) had no intention of speaking on this subject; but when he heard the remarks of the hon. Member for Shipley, evidently influenced by that malevolent pseudo-humanitarianism which was too common among gentlemen of his political persuasion, he felt bound to intervene with these few words. He trusted that the Government, in the settlement of Uganda, would bear in mind the great issues that were at stake. He trusted that they would look at this question not only from the point of view of the East Africa Company—a Company with which he had no interest whatever—or from that of the missionaries—English, and Scotch, and Roman Catholic, who had done a noble work in those regions—but that they would especially bear in mind the splendid Imperial interests now involved, and realise how important it was that British influence and power should not

now be withdrawn from this great and commanding position.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee) said, he trusted the views of the hon. Member for Caithness would not be regarded as representing the views of the general body of Liberal Members, or more particularly of the Liberal Members for Scotland. If there was one part of the country more than another which had expressed a strong interest with regard to our maintaining the position in which we found ourselves in Uganda he thought it was Scotland. Captain Lugard nowhere had larger or more enthusiastic meetings than those which were held in the large commercial centres of that country. Not only so, but those meetings were attended by many earnest religious people—supporters of our great Missionary Institutions, who, by their expressions at those meetings, indicated that they considered any retreat from the position that the Government had taken up there would be not only a great blow to civilisation, but also to the advancement of our common Christianity. He understood that this Vote was simply to meet the expenses which arose in maintaining our position in Uganda. Inquiries had been made into the question by request of Her Majesty's Government, to enable them to come to a decision. The country at one time was in a state of anarchy. Wars were going on between the native tribes, and unless the interference that did take place had taken place, the results would have been most disastrous. He hoped there would not be, on the Liberal side of the House more particularly, a disposition on such an occasion as this to place the worst construction upon the actions of our own countrymen, and, as far as possible, to diminish our influence on that great Continent. They should have some regard to the manner in which our Empire had been made. It had not been made by a succession of retreats. The motto of Englishmen and Scotchmen everywhere had been "Forward." It should be so still. He, for one, was not for hauling down the British flag wherever it had been properly hoisted. There was a great difference between mere Jingoism and true Constitutional views of the progress of our country and of our Empire; and it would be a disastrous

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day for the Liberal Party if they forgot that it was a Party which in the past had identified itself with our Imperial progress. He, for one, had felt it his duty to enter his protest against what was the inclination of a small section of the Liberal Party, as he thought, to lower its position in the face of the country.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I certainly did not expect that so many points would have been raised in the course of this Debate, and I have no intention of in any way anticipating what the decision of the Government as to the future of Uganda is going to be. We have promised the House already more than once that this decision will be announced soon after Easter, and that we will afford every facility for a full discussion of that decision. I see from the present Debate that the Government have been very fairly and freely warned that whatever their decision may be, whether it be to stay or to leave the country, they must expect determined opposition from one quarter of the House or another. I do not know that this is a new incident for any Government. I think I can understand very well the reason why some Members should have expressed disappointment that Sir Gerald Portal's Report has not yet been presented. But I should like to point out that unforeseen circumstances have occurred which have delayed the presentation of Sir Gerald Portal's Report. Sir Gerald Portal on his way to England revised his Report very adequately and completely, and it was not received by the Government until a comparatively late date. The Government then naturally felt that before making up their minds it would be an immense advantage to them to have the opportunity of close personal communication with Sir Gerald Portal himself. The House knows very well the sad circumstance that has taken place. Sir Gerald Portal's death has not only been a loss to the House and to the Government so far as this particular question is concerned, but his death is a distinct loss to the country as regards much future public service. But though the Report has been delayed, the delay has entailed no loss to the country. The

Government announced last year that they intended to maintain, pending the presentation of the Report, the then existing condition of affairs in Uganda, so that it might be possible either to take over the country or leave it. That freedom of choice has been kept perfectly open. Therefore, although the announcement of the decision may have been delayed, so far as the interests of this country in Uganda are concerned, they have been preserved at the present time as fully as they were a year ago, and the choice of hon. Members as regard their vote will be just as free three or four weeks hence as it is at the present time, or as it would have been a year ago. The Government have instituted a policy of inquiry; and with regard to the policy of inquiry, some hon. Members on the other side of the House say they consider no inquiry is necessary. The hon. Member for Liverpool said so, and he was cheered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean. Why did the hon. Member for Liverpool say that he considered no inquiry was necessary?

MR. LAWRENCE: I stated that the facts were perfectly known on which a policy could be framed.

*SIR E. GREY: Yes; but the conclusion the hon. Member would have drawn from the facts is that the country should be retained; but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean would have drawn the conclusion that it should not be retained. Surely that is a complete justification of the policy of inquiry. The hon. Member for Peterborough complained that the Government did not keep the pledge they gave when they took the Vote of £12,000 about a year ago. But the Government never pledged themselves to come to a decision about Uganda in the course of a year or in any time short of a year. All they promised was that as soon as the inquiry was completed a decision should be come to, and until that inquiry is completed the future of Uganda shall not be pledged.

MR. A. C. MORTON: Does this Vote go beyond the present financial year?

SIR E. GREY: The Vote does not go beyond the present financial year. The hon. Member also thinks the expense has

been too great. He complained that we ought not to have taken over a lot of stores from the East Africa Company. The Government did not take over the stores because it benefited the East Africa Company, but because these stores were necessary for the Mission they had sent to the country. Surely the hon. Member would not have the Government reject these stores which were on the spot simply because they belonged to the company, and send for a brand-new lot.

MR. A. C. MORTON: The hon. Baronet ought to have told us that he would want this extra money when he asked for the £12,000.

SIR E. GREY: The Government could not possibly tell how long it would take to complete the inquiry and to investigate all the circumstances of the case. No pledge as to a limit of time was given last year. The hon. Member for Northampton remarked upon the fact that part of the money had been paid to the Soudanese in the country. The Soudanese were not brought into the country by Sir Gerald Portal; they were there before his Mission arrived. Here was a large body of men in the country who could be employed to maintain the British position there during the temporary occupation necessary for the inquiry. They were the very men for the purpose in many ways, and, being on the spot, they were to be had cheaply. It was only reasonable, therefore, that if any people were to be paid to support the Mission in Uganda these Soudanese were the most suitable. If these Soudanese had not been taken over there would have been turned loose in the middle of Africa an armed band of men, excellent under discipline, but very formidable without discipline. It would be impossible to say what the conduct of those men would have been. They would have been a danger in any part of the country. At present the men are kept under control; and, if their services are no longer needed, they are now gathered together in one place and can be turned over to other employers, no one being the worse. As to the question of the Catholics, which has been raised by the hon. and gallant Member for Galway, of course there is no need to say that as long as the present Government exercises any influence in Uganda they

will take care that it is exercised most impartially between the different Religious Bodies. The hon. and gallant Member for Galway admitted that since Sir Gerald Portal went to the country the Catholics have had no reason to complain of any unfair treatment. But he said that they had been left without any arms in their hands. To a great extent it is very desirable that masses of natives in Africa should be without arms; and I have no reason to suppose that the Catholic body was less well armed than their neighbours the Protestant body.

COLONEL NOLAN: What are they to do against these Soudanese, whom the hon. Baronet says would be a danger if the British influence was withdrawn?

*SIR E. GREY: That will be a most appropriate question to raise when the future of Uganda is decided by the Government. The Government have pledged themselves that the present condition of things shall be maintained until their decision is announced, and on that occasion the question raised by the hon. and gallant Member can be discussed. With respect to the warnings given on behalf of the Anti-Slavery Society, they will be borne in mind. I think it a little unfair for the hon. Member for Peterborough to found upon the action of the Government in regard to this policy of inquiry a charge of indulging in a spirited foreign policy. When the Government came into Office they naturally knew nothing about Uganda. They had to go for any information about the country to the Reports of people who had been on the spot, and everyone who had been on the spot told them that if Uganda were abandoned it would become the centre of the Slave Trade, that massacres would follow between sections of the natives, and that then the Mahomedans would probably fall upon the survivors. They were further told that great possibilities of future trade would be lost to this country if Uganda were abandoned. Before the Report of Sir Gerald Portal is laid and before the decision of the Government is announced—I am not going to say anything as to how far those apprehensions were well founded or not, but that was the information that was given to the Government when they came into Office by everyone who had been on the spot. We had no means of disproving that at

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the time, and we were bound—and it was the very least that we could do—before we left the country to send some responsible man on behalf of the Government to inquire into the condition of things in Uganda and see whether these apprehensions were well founded or not. Surely it was hardly fair to say that this rendered the Government liable to a charge of indulging in a spirited or perhaps a Jingo policy. The Government in sending this Mission of inquiry kept their word to both sides of the House, both to those who were in favour of staying in Uganda and those who wished to withdraw, and I can assure the Committee that the Government is most anxious that there shall be no further delay in announcing their decision and having a discussion in the House, which shall settle—I hope for many years to come—perhaps for ever, what the future of Uganda is to be.

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes 198 ; Noes 9.—(Division List, No. 6.)

11. Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £88,567, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1894, for sundry Colonial Services and certain Charges connected with South Africa.”

MR. HANBURY said, he observed that we paid to High Commissioners travelling and other expenses. He wished to know whether the salary of the High Commissioner was paid by the Cape Government or by the Imperial Government, as there was no mention of salary in the Vote? If the Cape Government paid the salary and the Imperial Government the expenses, it was an anomalous position. He thought the salary ought to be paid by the Imperial Government.

MR. S. BUXTON said, the salary of the High Commissioner was paid from three sources : £5,000 from the Cape Government, £3,000 as High Commissioner, and £1,000 from Imperial funds, making £9,000 in all, which he thought, under the circumstances, was a living wage.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he thought the hon. Member for Dundee was a little hard on the Liberal Government, for,

from his point of view, the Liberal Government was not sufficiently Jingo. Whatever it might be elsewhere, in Africa it was persistently Jingo. They, who were opposed to all this annexation and massacre of black people, were less anxious when a Conservative Government were in than when a Liberal Government were in. He supposed the reason was that the Conservative Government did not want the whole Opposition or the Front Bench attacking them for their policy, and, therefore, they did not encourage these enterprises in Africa. But when a Liberal Government were in they encouraged these enterprises, knowing that they had the whole of the Conservative Opposition to support them, with a certain number of their own Party. Having a quiet time at home, they offered up on the altar of their happiness a certain number of African blacks. In this sum there was an item for the Bechuanaland Police Force. He did not intend to go into everything that had taken place in Matabeleland. He had already expressed his views on that subject, and would now only refer to two points to show why he was opposed to this particular Vote. The origin of this war was that the Chartered Company, finding themselves almost ruined by Mashonaland, of which they had possession, determined to obtain the neighbouring country, which they thought was rich, or thought they would be able to persuade people was rich, and thereby obtain their money. Of course, a pretext was necessary. Therefore, Lobengula was asked to come into Mashonaland to chastise certain of his Mashonaland subjects. This Lobengula did, and did very cruelly no doubt, being a savage. The officers of the Chartered Company then told the men that they must clear out of Mashonaland within an hour, and within three hours they pursued them, killing and wounding a large number. Upon this Lobengula complained of the action of the company, and the company complained of the action of Lobengula, saying that he intended to return to Mashona with a large force. Lobengula wrote to the High Commissioner, and did all he could in order to convince the company that he did not desire to engage in war. But, of course, the object of the company was to seize Matabele-

land in order to restore their damaged finances, and so the war was forced on. This war was waged with great cruelty. The Chartered Company had a number of Maxim guns, and the Matabele being very brave advanced on these guns and were mowed down. He had often asked about the wounded, mainly for the reason that he found in a telegraph Despatch from Mr. Rhodes that the killed and wounded numbered 3,000, of which 2,000 were wounded; and that over 30 wounded were brought into Bulawayo. They had been told that the wounded Matabele were carried away by their friends, but that was absolutely impossible. Out of 4,000 Matabele, 1,000 were killed, 2,000 were wounded, and 1,000 were neither killed nor wounded; and they were asked to believe that the 2,000 wounded were carried away by the 1,000 who were neither killed nor wounded from under the fire of the Maxim guns.

SIR E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT dissented.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, the hon. Gentleman, as usual, knew nothing of the subject. His whole stock-in-trade consisted of general, vague abuse of everyone on the Ministerial side and the waving of the British flag, although he believed the hon. Gentleman was an American, not an English citizen. ["Oh, oh!" and "Order, order!"] Well, he did not like these Americans. He contended that the war was cruelly waged. Lobengula sent two Envoys to Mr. Dawson, and they were killed by "an unfortunate accident," as it was called. He was bound to say that the war was carried on in a manner altogether inconsistent with the rules of civilised warfare—even against blacks. No doubt there were honourable men in the company's forces. There were always a number of honourable men who for the love of adventure more than anything else were ever ready to accompany these expeditions. But these did not represent the mass of the company's forces. The terms of service of some of the forces of the Chartered Company was that they should receive a certain portion of land, a number of mining claims, and a certain share of loot—the word "loot" was actually used in the agreement. He challenged anyone acquainted with military matters to say that those were

the sort of men who should be properly enlisted to serve in conjunction with Imperial forces. He called them, as he had always called them, filibusters and desperadoes, who only went there with the object of obtaining loot and land and destroying the proprietors of the soil. The military kraals of the Matabele were burnt, and at last the company's forces arrived at Bulawayo, and, so far as he understood, the whole country had been seized. Lobengula and many of his men had been driven into the jungle or swamps, where they had died of starvation or small-pox. Surely it was reasonable that some few Members in that House should protest against any forces of the Imperial Government engaging in war for the sake of a company. After all, a company was only a collection of individuals. The question was, what was the action of the Government in this matter? They recognised the war on the part of the Chartered Company, and ordered Sir Henry Loch, he believed, to direct the Bechuanaland Police Force to be strengthened in order to join in the attack on Lobengula. Hon. Gentlemen would remember that they were informed that the Bechuanaland Police had been fired on by certain of the Matabele, and that this was the reason for the war. That did not appear in the Blue Books. He had looked through them and had failed to find anything about it. It appeared to him that the allegation was dismissed when it had served its turn.

MR. S. BUXTON: It is in the earlier Blue Book.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that even if it was in an earlier Blue Book what did it amount to? No attempt was made to inquire into the matter. Lobengula was not asked to give up the men who had fired on the company's forces, but war was declared against the Matabele. One of the reasons given in the Blue Book why the Bechuanaland Police were reinforced and ordered to advance to the frontier was on account of a fear which was stated to exist lest liquor should be introduced into Khama's country. Well, Matabeleland having been conquered, the question was, to whom did it belong? On what grounds could it be contended that this country, which was as large as France, had become the pro-

perty of the Chartered Company? The Solicitor General gave it as his opinion that no Chartered Company could acquire by conquest property which had been brought under the British flag. The hon. and learned Gentleman laughed at the idea that it could become the property of the company. If individuals acquired territory by conquest, it became the property of the country of which those individuals were subjects. Then his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies fell back on certain concessions. He (Mr. Labouchere) inquired about those, too. He had asked the Solicitor General if the case had been put before him, and he had said that it had not, and that, therefore, he could not answer it. He had asked the Under Secretary if he would put it to the Solicitor General, and his hon. Friend declined to state a case, probably because there was no case to put. The Colonial Office appeared to be in the position of being obliged to accept every trumped-up statement put before it by the Chartered Company. In regard to the mining concession, not in the name of the Queen, but the Queen herself wrote to King Lobengula stating that if he would agree to the concession—which he subsequently said he had been cheated out of—she would pledge her word that he should in no sort of way be damnified thereby, and that the persons enjoying the concessions should not exercise any jurisdiction over his subjects, and that the former should only dig for gold where he permitted them to dig. Surely the Government were bound to support and respect the pledge of the Queen, and to step forward, not to help the company, but to defend Lobengula. The Under Secretary said that these matters concerned the late Government, but he should think that if any policy ought to be continuous it ought to be one which was based upon the pledged word of the Queen. He was satisfied that the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir J. Fergusson) would have bounded into the air with indignation if it were suggested to him that the pledges embodied in the Queen's word given under a Tory Government were to be thrown aside when a Liberal Government came into power. If the right hon. Gentleman opposite, however, would look at the questions put

in the House and the answers returned, he would find that there had been no continuity of policy. None of the concessions gave the right to acquire land, but that which this Chartered Company possessed under the Treaty with Lobengula in cases where they were mining by the permission of the King. There they were allowed to take land, but nowhere else. But it seemed to the company more simple to go and take the land. It was never intended that the company were to compel the Native Chiefs to make concessions of land to them under duress. Reading through the Blue Book it seemed to him that the Colonial Office were terrified by Mr. Rhodes. They wrote to the company saying that they should do so-and-so. Mr. Rhodes laughed at them, and then they backed out. What value had the company put upon the land which they had acquired through these forced concessions? At a meeting of the shareholders of the company that was held in London the shareholders voted £1,000,000 worth of shares to Mr. Rhodes and his fellow-promoters, whilst they voted £1,500,000 to themselves in the way of bonus. Even presuming that the view of the Government with regard to the rights of the company to obtain this land was well founded, why in the name of wonder should the taxpayers of this country be called upon to pay this sum of £80,000 in order to enable the company to enter upon this land, which they described as flowing with milk and honey and teeming with gold, when the company themselves were voting away millions? The company were well able to pay it themselves; and if it were advanced at all, why was it not advanced as a loan, and made a charge upon the company's funds? He therefore moved to reduce the Vote by £80,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Item Q, of £80,000 (Bechuanaland Grant in Aid), be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, that the hon. Member for Northampton had just made a speech of a very different nature from that which he had made when the subject came up before, because he had now dealt with the matter rather

from a practical point of view and with less of those personal attacks upon the Company which he would not say graced his former speeches. He would not go over again the whole question as to the origin of the war, nor into the question as to the way in which the operations had been conducted. The Committee were perfectly well aware that the view taken by Her Majesty's Government in relation to this matter did not agree with that of the hon. Member; and, in reply to the remarks of the hon. Member, he could only repeat what he had already had occasion to state as clearly as he could. He had already stated that, so far as he could judge, and in the opinion of the Government, the war had not been provoked by the Company: further, that, as a matter of fact—though very probably at some time or other the Company might have come into conflict with Lobengula—as regarded last autumn, at all events, the war was to the Company very unwelcome and unexpected. And all he could say was that the information that had reached him since he made that statement confirmed its accuracy. The war was very inconvenient at the time to the Company; and he was convinced that the only desire of the Company was to live in peace with Lobengula, and to endeavour to develop Mashonaland, before any extension was made into Matabeleland. He did not deny that at some time or other it was likely that the Company would have extended their operations into Matabeleland. With regard to the way in which the war was conducted, the hon. Member had said that it had been marked by great brutality. Well, he had endeavoured to obtain every possible scrap of information, anonymous and otherwise, and he said, speaking with a full sense of responsibility, that, broadly speaking, the operations were conducted with humanity and propriety. He did not say that there might not have been isolated cases of barbarity and inhumanity. Unfortunately, war was brutal and brutalising, and the incidents of no war would bear a microscopical examination; but he believed that these hostilities would compare favourably in that matter with any other of our native wars. He asserted, at all events, that the leaders of these operations—those who were responsible

for them—did desire, having no hostility to the Matabele as such, while carrying out the operations successfully, to do as little harm and hurt to the Matabele as was possible under the circumstances. As regarded the question of the wounded, his hon. Friend appeared to know exactly how many wounded there ought to have been—

MR. LABOUCHERE: Excuse me; I cited a telegraphic Despatch from Mr. Rhodes himself.

MR. S. BUXTON said, that that particular telegram he had never been able to see. Perhaps in the excitement of the moment there was exaggeration in Mr. Rhodes's estimate. But, however that might be, it was quite clear from the accounts received that the number of killed and wounded did not approach anything like the 3,000 mentioned by his hon. Friend; indeed, the official information showed that it did not reach half that number. Further, the fighting was in no respect of the nature described. The greater part of the fighting was mainly in the bush and at longish range, and the Matabele had ample opportunity of carrying off their wounded, while those left on the field received, he fully believed, succour and help from the Company's troops, so far as their limited means permitted—and their means were very limited. He did not wish to go further into the question, because the hon. Member had only raised it incidentally, but he thought it only just, from all the information he had been able to obtain, to say so much in regard to these two matters. The hon. Gentleman had suggested that as the Company were going to take possession of the country, the cost of the war ought to fall upon the shareholders. But the whole sum which the Government were now asking for was incurred for Imperial purposes, and to enable them to carry out their Imperial responsibilities. He did not think that anybody would deny that when difficulties arose between Lobengula and the Company it was the duty of Her Majesty's Government to take care that the lives and property of those within the territory for which the British Government was responsible should be protected. This expenditure for which the House was asked to provide was primarily for Imperial purposes, and only secondarily

for the benefit of the Company. To their success, when hostilities had begun, we could not be indifferent. And he ventured to say that the presence and action of the Imperial force had effected a very material diversion, and had done much to ensure the success of the Company's columns. He could hardly think that his hon. Friend was serious in suggesting that the bill should be sent in to Mr. Rhodes. His hon. Friend said that if the Company obtained the country they ought to pay the cost. But they would take it over burdened with considerable administrative expenditure, for the Government must insist upon the introduction of a satisfactory system of administration and securities for the protection of the natives. Looking at the matter from the Imperial point of view, the British taxpayer would largely benefit. The great cost of Bechuanaland had arisen from the necessity of keeping up a large and expensive police force on the border, owing to the proximity of the warlike and restless Matabele, and in future the expenditure could be considerably reduced. One cause of expenditure had been the heavy cost of transport, and he hoped that, when the time came, the Government would have the support of his hon. Friend in the matter of the railway extension.

MR. LABOUCHERE asked if the question of the railway would be submitted to the House?

MR. S. BUXTON said, the railway was still a matter of negotiation, but the Government pledged themselves that nothing would be done to commit them until the House had had an opportunity of expressing an opinion in regard to it. There was only one further matter to which his hon. Friend had referred, and that was the question of the concessions. They discussed that on the last occasion at some considerable length, and the position which the Government had taken up in regard to that matter, and the position they were bound to take up, was that these concessions were recognised and confirmed by the late Government; they had been confirmed and acted upon for some years past, and they had really never been repudiated, but had been recognised by Lobengula himself. That being so, it would have been quite impossible for the Government, coming

in at the eleventh hour, to repudiate those concessions, even if they had wished to do so. As to the final disposal of Matabeleland itself, he had hoped before this Debate came on to have been in a position to lay the settlement before the House for their consideration. He regretted to say, however, that there had been unavoidable delays, and the Government had not been able to decide the matter finally in all its details so as to lay it before the House. He would, however, state broadly what the proposals of the Government with reference to Matabeleland were. On going carefully into the matter they found that there were nominally two alternatives before them—namely, the creation of a Crown Colony on the one hand, or the utilisation of the existing machinery of the Charter on the other. Though there were, in his opinion, great advantages in the Crown Colony system over government by a Chartered Company, broadly speaking there was really no alternative before the Government. They had to utilise the existing state of things under the Charter, and they could not create a Crown Colony in Matabeleland, because they found that the Charter did absolutely include Matabeleland as well as, and as much as, Mashonaland. It was the evident intention when the Charter was granted that the Company should at some future time administer Matabeleland as well as Mashonaland.

DR. CLARK: But not steal it.

MR. S. BUXTON said, those districts had been administered under a regular form of government for some time, and, when the necessity arose—as it did arise after the war—of deciding under what form of government Matabeleland should be placed, it became in the view of the Government essential, in the circumstances, to extend the operations of administration under the Charter. Looking at the question all round that was the conclusion which the Government came to; and this certainly was the strong opinion in the colony itself. Though they ought not to accept colonial opinion if it was thought to be inconsistent with justice and right, they ought to take it favourably into account in considering such a question as this. Broadly speaking, the proposal

of the Government was this, and he wished to add that the Company had met the Government loyally in the matter. They proposed to supersede, both for Mashonaland and Matabeleland, the old loose, experimental system of Government by an administration on a stronger and a more definite basis. There would be a Governing Body consisting of an Administrator, a Judge, and three Members of Council, who would have practically the power to administer both countries as one. The Administrator and Judge would be nominated by the Company, but appointed only with the direct assent of the Secretary of State, and the Judge would be irremovable, except by the Secretary of State. As to the natives, who were their chief care, their laws and their rights would be carefully preserved, while their material position would be dealt with by a Land Commission, consisting of three members, one the Judge, a second nominated by the Secretary of State, and the third by the Company. That Commission will report to the Secretary of State, and its decisions will be subject to revision at home. The first duty of that Commission will be to see that sufficient and suitable land is allotted to the natives, and that their agricultural and grazing requirements are fully complied with. Under these circumstances, the Government believed they would have a system of administration which would be of advantage to that part of South Africa, and were clear in their minds that the rights and necessities of the natives would be fully met. Looking at the matter broadly, whatever might be thought of the hostilities, their causes, and the way in which they were carried through, there could be little doubt that the Matabele themselves, relieved of a cruel yoke and a grinding blood tax, would, with sufficient land, cattle, and water, be able to settle down peacefully, and would certainly be better off than before. With regard to the subsidiary tribes, the Mashonas and others would be relieved from what was to them a frightful tyranny, barbarity, and slavery, and they, too, would be far better off than before. He did not say that in justification of any war which might not in itself be just, but he contended that the war was not premeditated by the Company, and that

when undertaken it was carried through with skill, success, and humanity. He was sure that since the war the natives had been treated with the utmost possible consideration, and all the evidence in the possession of the Government went to show that the Company, so far as it had had direct dealings with the natives, had treated them with kindness and consideration. In defending the Vote, he would not put it on the ground that this was the smallest Vote ever proposed for a native war—some of them had cost millions, most of them hundreds of thousands of pounds—but would merely say that the operations had been conducted skilfully and economically, and the upshot would be to the benefit of the Europeans and no less of the natives themselves.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT remarked that after the satisfactory speech of the Under Secretary he should not have troubled the House with any observations but for the fact that the Member for Northampton, in the course of his speech, saw fit to make what he thought he was justified in describing as a gross personal attack upon himself. The attack was altogether unworthy of notice, and he should only notice it because these statements, if not contradicted, undoubtedly tended to create prejudice against the person who was attacked. He would only say this to the Committee—that his ancestors were entirely English, that he had a legal claim to be a British subject, and that he was a British subject.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I am loth to interrupt the hon. Member. What he says is true, that an attack was made upon him, and I was on the point of rising to call the hon. Member for Northampton to Order when he made that attack. It would be undesirable to continue the subject, and it would certainly be out of Order.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I withdraw it with pleasure.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT should say nothing more as to that matter, having said all he wished to say. The hon. Gentleman in his statement to the Committee had made a very different speech to that which the House was accustomed to hear from him. They had heard from the hon.

Gentleman before very grievous attacks upon our colonists in Mashonaland and upon the conduct of the war. On previous occasions the hon. Member had brought charges of gross barbarity against the colonists, and the men who carried out a campaign of unexampled success against a very numerous and very well-organised enemy, but they had heard no attempt on the part of the hon. Member to-night to justify the statements he had made before.

MR. LABOUCHERE : Do you want me to ?

SIR E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT said, the hon. Member asked him if he wanted him to. He told him he did not believe he could. The hon. Gentleman by his attacks had caused most grievous suffering to the relations of these gallant Englishmen who had been engaged in defending the interests of the country and the Empire, and their own homes in Mashonaland. When the Vote came on to-night the hon. Member made one or two vague statements about the massacre of wounded, but he had not in any way attempted to justify the gross and absolutely unjustifiable attacks which he had made upon previous occasions against our colonists who were engaged in that campaign. He was not surprised that the relations of the gallant men engaged in the expedition should have challenged the statements of the hon. Member in language which could not be misunderstood and which he was bound as a Member of the House and an honourable man to answer. The Under Secretary for the Colonies had stated in his place that no war was ever conducted with greater consideration for the vanquished compared favourably with other wars. As the hon. Gentleman had stated, everyone knew that in warfare there must always be instances, however small, of treatment of the vanquished which every humane man in peaceful times would regret. The hon. Member for Northampton, however, had done far more than allege there were these casual instances. He had over and over again in this House and in the Press brought charges of general cruelty against our colonists who had carried this war to a successful termination, and he (Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett) declared that the hon. Member had not said one

single sentence in justification of these charges, and he did not believe he had any facts at his command upon which he could justify them. The hon. Gentleman had said it was impossible to carry away the wounded men, but the Under Secretary had shown how the conditions of this campaign differed from ordinary European warfare. Our fellow-countrymen in that campaign were a small body—from 600 to 800 men. They had to fight in laagers, the enemy attacked them, and only on one occasion after attack did a small body of mounted men issue from a laager. On all other occasions they assumed the defensive, and simply repulsed any attack that was made upon them. Undoubtedly the Matabele suffered heavily, and though they were barbarians whose whole past had been cruel, and who had inflicted heavy sufferings on their fellow tribes, still they regretted that many of them should have been killed and wounded. It was perfectly evident, however, that in a struggle of this kind that, if the enemy had once reached the British laager and come to close quarters with our men, it would have been a question of the entire annihilation of the British force. But to say that the Matabele, who numbered thousands, as against a few hundred white men, were not able to carry off their wounded was utterly absurd. The wounded were carried away by their comrades just as were the wounded in the Soudan. The Soudanese attacked our forces and were repulsed, and many wounded lay on the field of battle, but they were invariably carried off by their comrades. Some thousands of the Matabele survived, and to suggest that the survivors could not carry off the wounded was an utter absurdity. The hon. Gentleman had altogether failed to substantiate the charges against our colonists, and he wanted this £80,000 for the extra Bechuanaland police imposed upon the Chartered Company. Was the hon. Gentleman aware that the Chartered Company had been put to great expense by this campaign, an expense far greater than the sum of £80,000 which was now asked for? The result of the action of the Company, as had been well said by the hon. Gentleman who had spoken on behalf of the Government, was the destruction of a

barbaric organisation which was a continual source of danger to neighbouring tribes and of peril to our English settlers. In the future the number of the Bechuanaland police could be considerably reduced. He regretted, having regard to the remarkable sacrifices made by our colonists and to the great success of this war, that no reference had been made to the subject in the Queen's Speech; and he believed that our colonists in South Africa would feel aggrieved at the omission. Gentlemen who were disposed to underrate the great Imperial work that had been done by the Chartered Company in Matabeleland should note the remarkable pronouncement just issued by General Joubert, who had informed the people of the Transvaal in a public Proclamation that by the conquest of Matabeleland British supremacy in South Africa was established for all time. Was that a slight advantage? The operations of Mr. Rhodes and the Chartered Company had not brought us into conflict with the people of the Transvaal, but had so far secured British influence over the territory south of the Zambesi. A vast region had been opened up to British commerce, and the Chartered Company and Mr. Rhodes had done more than any act of the Government for the last few years to secure for this country great openings for its trade, and he believed the great mass of the people of this country were grateful to the Company and to Mr. Rhodes, who was undoubtedly an Imperial statesman of the highest order. He would only say one word as to the action of the Government in this matter. The hon. Member for Northampton had consistently endeavoured to attribute blame to the Chartered Company for this war. The Under Secretary of State had just told the House with very great accuracy that the war was not sought for by the Chartered Company; that it was most inconvenient to the Chartered Company, that it was a great cost to the Company, and it had yet to be proved that the results of the war would increase the revenues of the Company. But he would say this with regard to the action of the Government. He had studied the Blue Books with great care. Before the second Blue Book was issued last August and September he confessed he

was disposed to attribute the cause of this war entirely to the Matabele King, Lobengula. He thought, however, that the Blue Book recently issued entirely acquitted Lobengula and the Chartered Company of responsibility for the war, but it did not acquit the Government. Lobengula did not desire war, and the Chartered Company did not desire war. What was wanted was an agency to bring about an understanding between Lobengula and the Chartered Company. Dr. Jamieson, the Administrator, formerly at Salisbury and now at Bulawayo, wrote a Despatch to Lobengula, in August, in which he distinctly put forward the demands of the Chartered Company in plain language, but how was he treated? Lord Ripon, from the Colonial Office, sent out a telegram to Sir Henry Loch instructing him to tell Dr. Jamieson and Mr. Rhodes that no communications were to be made to Lobengula except by Her Majesty's Representatives. What did the Government do?

MR. S. BUXTON: I should like to interrupt the hon. Member for one moment. I do not know that the matter is of great importance. As a matter of fact, Dr. Jamieson had instructions given him, but it so happened that Mr. Rhodes gave the same instructions before we had done so.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, this did not in the least affect his argument. The hon. Gentleman had admitted that the Government sent instructions to Dr. Jamieson telling him there was to be no communication between him and Lobengula except through Her Majesty's Representatives. How were the communications made? Lobengula sent message after message asking the Government to tell him what was their complaint against him, and they sent him no practical reply. They sent vague general statements by native runners. Had they sent a reliable agent with a clear statement of policy the war might have been averted. Had they, even at the conclusion of the war, sent a man like Dr. Moffat, the unfortunate episodes that had happened since—the destruction of Captain Wilson's gallant band and the death of the unfortunate Matabele Monarch himself—might have been averted. But it was only a case of

drift, drift, drift! with Her Majesty's Government. They were asked for their policy, but they would not take the responsibility. When they were begged in August and September last to take responsibility for the lives and property of our colonists in Mashonaland and Matabeleland they parried the question. He remembered the late Prime Minister making him a long answer in which he refused to take responsibility. He did not refuse responsibility, but he refused to take responsibility, which was the same thing. He remembered another occasion on which the right hon. Gentleman came down to the House when the war had been triumphantly concluded and our colonists were in Buluwayo, and then he had said, "We assume responsibility." He only wished, in conclusion, to say that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton had, after making the grossest charges against his fellow-countrymen in Mashonaland, absolutely failed to substantiate them, and in this respect he had, in his humble judgment, been guilty of conduct not worthy of a Member of that House. And in addition to what he had just said, if Her Majesty's Government had assumed responsibility sufficiently early in the day, and had sent a reliable British agent, whom Lobengula could have trusted, to Buluwayo, this unfortunate and sanguinary war might have been prevented.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, that after the speech of his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies, he should support his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton in voting against this sum. From the beginning this subject had been brought before them under clouds of misrepresentation. The original concession, they were told by Lobengula, was got by fraud and misrepresentation; the Charter was got by misrepresentation and fraud. The war began under conditions of fraud and misrepresentation, and now they would to-night vote fraudulently—there was not the slightest doubt about it, by a large majority—£80,000 also by misrepresentation and fraud. They were asked to vote £80,000 for the defence of Bechuanaland, and nobody ever attacked Bechuanaland or attempted to attack it, but they attacked a neighbour and an ally, and be-

cause they did so, said they were defending themselves. What was the position of affairs? Lobengula was the King of the Matabeles. We were very anxious to be on friendly terms with him. We sent Envoys and messengers of various kinds from the Imperial Government and from the Colonial Government in order to treat with him. We had some six or seven years before secured Tati. We had got some British subjects who went there and got a concession from him. He said he did not understand the words which he had signed because they seemed afterwards to be quite different; and he sent two of his Indunas here; he sent Ambassadors to this country, and the Queen sent back a message to him and Lord Knutsford. The Secretary for the Colonies wrote a letter to him, and in that letter he was to be protected by the Queen. Her Majesty's subjects were only given permission to do as we wanted them; and the King took away the forces he had. A number of her subjects settled in Mashonaland, and now these subjects of ours, this Chartered Company, went to war with our ally the King of Matabeleland, and we were going to vote £80,000 for our share in the war. How did the war come about? The Chartered Company said some of his subjects had stolen our property and we took from them some of the King's cattle. The King said—

"Do not take my cattle from these people. If you have anything to complain about tell me and I will chastise them."

And then they complained that some more of his people had been cutting the telegraphic wires and asked him to chastise them. He sent forces to chastise these subjects, but the Company had them shot down. They were told that a shot was fired. A shot was always fired. There were two causes for the two wars, the war for the Imperial Government and the war for the Company. The pretext for the war for the Company was that a shot was fired. Who fired that shot? Nobody fired that shot. Who was hurt by that shot? Nobody. It was a myth manufactured here to delude credulous people. What was the pretext for the war between the Imperial Government and the Matabeles? It was a defensive war he supposed. The pretext was that there was some trouble in the North be-

tween the Company and the Matabeles, and we sent a portion of our forces into Matabeleland. Why should we send a portion of our forces into Matabeleland? Why were these Bechuanas sent to the Mac-loutsie River at all. They ought to have been in Bechuanaland. Three men of that force, a corporal and two men, were far away in Matabeleland at Mac-loutsie River, and these sent back a statement that they saw some Matabeles and a shot was fired. That was outside the British Protectorate.

MR. S. BUXTON : It has always been disputed territory up to some 18 months ago or so, when it was brought under our protection and came under the British Protectorate, and it was on the borders of that territory that those shots were fired.

DR. CLARK said, they only had information that one shot was fired. Nobody was hurt, nothing else occurred, and there was only a telegraphic rumour in the last Blue Book, and there was no more information. They only heard indirectly that three men were out scouting. They saw Matabeles, and a shot was fired. They were going to have a war with an ally that they were very anxious to get on their side, and there only excuse was that some three or four men were in their territory and a shot was fired. What did the King reply?

"From Lobengula to the High Commissioner. --I am tired of hearing lies which come to me every day. How many of your people have my people killed? You say my people fired on yours twice. How many are dead? Are your people stones that bullets do not kill them? You hear what your people say. Lend two of your men to me, and I will give them what assistance I can to find out who were the people who have done this. Your people must want something from me. Why do not you catch the people who fired upon you and bring them to me? There are none of my people who have been firing on you either at Victoria or Mac-loutsie. When these reports are made to you, do not you ask how many of your men are killed? This is not right. They see the things which may lead to what their hearts wish for. I have no people out of my border. My people are sick, and stay at their homes. When you make up your minds to do and know it is not right to blame it on my people, you send me no answer to all the letters I send you. I do not understand this. . . . I hear your people have taken more of my cattle. This is now four times my cattle have been taken."

Now they were to vote £80,000 for the defence of Bechuanaland, because a shot

was fired by the Matabeles. And the King said—

"Who were they? They are none of my people. Send someone to me, and if any of my men have done wrong I will give compensation."

But they never sent a man nor a message. They asked Lobengula to send some of his men, and how did they treat them when they got them? They were basely murdered, and never got to the Chief Commissioner. The man that came to London to see Her Majesty's Government we sent at the very beginning to settle this matter; but unfortunately, before he got to our territory, or wherever he came across the white men, he was attacked by disease. He had a very bad attack of dysentery. It was thought by the Matabeles that he was being poisoned. There was our own Commissioner; there was the gentleman who had been born in Matabeleland, and whose father had been a missionary to Lobengula's father, and who talked the Matabele tongue better than he talked English. He had been there for two years until the plot began. He had been a Representative of the British Government. He was sent to Lobengula two years ago; he was a resident with Lobengula; and then he was resident with Khama. He could have settled the matter in five minutes; but that did not suit Mr. Rhodes nor the men who wanted this land; and any man listening to the defence made by his hon. Friend to-night would come to the conclusion that, after all, there was some justification for the story always heard on the Continent—that we were a brigand nation, a nation of thieves, and stole everything we could. He said that when the Government gave that Charter, when they allowed them to come into Matabeleland they anticipated that Matabeleland also would be taken as well as Mashonaland—anticipated they would steal it, and hence gave them power to do so. The war was entirely unjustifiable; it was a war for loot and plunder; and the Government had aided and abetted in it either from weakness or some other cause. There had not been one word of justification for granting this money except that it was for Imperial purposes. They had attacked their old ally, and they had collared and stolen

his country. As to the new method of governing it, they were to have the old story, a commission of three to divide the land between the white men, who had no business to be there, and the natives. A dozen years ago a similar game was played in Bechuanaland, which was made a British colony. He went there 12 months after the delimitation had been determined between the white men and the natives. Was this to be a repetition in Matabeleland of the game that was played in Bechuanaland? If that was so, it would possibly have the same results. We took all the watered land and left the natives all the dry land, and when he was there men and cattle were dying for want of water. That is the way in which the people were driven out of the country. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield had attacked his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton. His hon. Friend had told them the truth, and he was not a man to mince his words. Apparently the hon. Gentleman had not read his Blue Books, and had not attended to their Debates, or he would have known better, and he would have known that there had been earlier complaints of cruelty by British officers, one of whom had been denounced by the Under Secretary as a murderer. They had heard of the cruelties of Captain Lendy. [An hon. MEMBER: He is dead.] They had the Under Secretary of State denouncing him as a murderer. [An hon. MEMBER: He is dead.] He could not help that. The Government had admitted the cruelty of this officer. There was an inquiry, but these inquiries were merely of a white-washing character, like the inquiry into the murder of Lobengula's Envoys. There never had been a native war as bad as this, or undertaken with so little reason, but it was only adding one more to the many crimes we had committed in South Africa.

MR. MAGUIRE (Clare, W.) said, he must protest against the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member who had just sat down. They were natural only to an ex-official of the Transvaal Government, and in the hon. Member's remarks he caught an echo of the proclamation of General Joubert already alluded to. But he rose mainly for the purpose of challenging some portions of the remarks of

the hon. Member for Northampton. What the hon. Member said about the general policy and conduct of the Chartered Company he was quite at liberty to say. These questions had been thoroughly gone into not only in previous Blue Books, but in course of Debates in Parliament. The general relations between the Chartered Company and the Government and the final opinion which was to be passed upon the policy of the company was a question for the company alone. His remarks were addressed to the character of the forces which carried out the operations of the company. The hon. Member stated that he considered these men were filibusters and freebooters, and were promised certain rewards and benefits if the operations turned out to be successful. The force under Commandant Raaf were recruited outside the territory, and he had nothing to say of them. They were not very actively engaged, but they acted like brave and honourable men. The force which bore the brunt of the war was the force known as the Salisbury and Fort Victoria columns, and they were the pick of the colonists of Mashonaland. They were men who had gone with their lives in their hands, and they went out literally to protect their homes and their property. To say that these men were influenced by the prospect of "rewards" was a ridiculous charge. The "rewards" were sold, some of them for £30 or £40, before the campaign commenced. Then there was the hon. Member's charge of the practice of great cruelty. He made these charges boldly enough, but he brought no evidence in support of them. He based his argument upon figures supplied in an unofficial telegram from Mr. Rhodes as to the killed and wounded. He thought these charges were sufficiently refuted by the Despatches of Sir J. Willoughby and Major Sawyer, the latter an independent authority, who was in the country. In any case, he would ask Members of the House not to believe the worst of their countrymen based on figures and garbled extracts in regard to which no proof whatever had been offered.

*MR. BYLES said, he intended to go into the Lobby with his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) against the Vote, because he felt

that in voting the money the Committee would be practically justifying the operations of the war in Matabeleland. Although he was speaking the opinion of very few Members of the House, he thought he was speaking that of a very large number of people in the country when he said that the incidents of that terrible campaign had given a shock to English feeling, and had made men feel that they were a scandal and a discredit to their country and to their religion. The hon. Gentleman opposite had spoken of the brave English colonists, who he said had been defending their homes in Mashonaland, but he had not spoken of the very much larger number of black natives who had been defending their homes in Matabeleland. The hon. Member who had last spoken, and the hon. Member for the Ecclesall Division, had spoken of the deaths of the natives as if they were speaking about the pawns on a chess-board, and with very little interest or feeling.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg pardon. I distinctly said in my speech that I greatly regretted the loss of life among the Matabele.

MR. BYLES said, that most of the black men who had been killed had been practically unarmed. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] Surely it would be admitted, when their arms were compared with the arms of precision which the British troops took against them, that the natives were practically unarmed. What chance had they with their poor arms against the Maxim guns and other weapons used against them? The hon. Gentleman opposite had said that if we had sent an Envoy the war would have been prevented. Well, Lobengula had sent Envoys, and they had been slaughtered. More than that, the aged King had been driven into the mountains, where he had met his death. These were shocking things. The King had trusted the White Queen of this country, and had believed that he would be honourably treated. All that had been done in the war had been done avowedly in the pursuit of gold, of diamonds, and of dividends. Something had been said about missionaries. The Rev. Mr. Moffat went as a missionary to the territory adjoining Matabeleland, and did a great deal towards civilising the people amongst

whom he settled. He taught the people the use of the spade and other implements of civilisation, and made friends with the natives. He did not quarrel with the natives or take Maxim guns to destroy them. It seemed to him (Mr. Byles) that the true policy of our country was the policy adopted by Mr. Moffat, and not that of depending upon implements of war, and, by destroying the people, bringing discredit upon the English name. He knew perfectly well that he should be taunted with being a member of a "Little England" Party, and called unpatriotic; but he protested in the name of many Englishmen and Englishwomen against such barbarous proceedings as had been carried on in Matabeleland. He did hope that the policy of running the Empire by Joint Stock Companies, as it had been described, would be put an end to.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he had been surprised to hear the proceedings in Matabeleland described almost for the first time as a native war. They were told a few months ago that it was simply a question of policy, and that the Chartered Company were defending themselves against an attack made upon them by Lobengula's people. The Under Secretary (Mr. Buxton) now admitted that it was a native war. He wanted to know what right the Government had to be engaged in a war at all without asking the consent of the House? He had always understood that it was the principle of Radicals that the House of Commons should be consulted before war was engaged in, and he thought it ought to be the principle of Radical Governments also. As a matter of fact, it was part of the constitution that the House should be consulted. If, then, this had been a native war, the Government ought in some way to have asked for the consent of the House, either by proposing a Vote on Account or in some other way. It was quite clear to everyone except the shareholders and those otherwise interested in the company that the war had been got up by the company for the purpose of bolstering up its finances, which had sunk to a very low ebb indeed. He did not desire at all to blame the officers and soldiers who conducted the war. He had no doubt that they did as they were

Mr. Byles

ordered and that they could not help themselves. It was those who gave them the orders that he complained of. His hon. Friend the Under Secretary had not given the information he had promised to the House. His hon. Friend said distinctly some time ago that he was going to make an inquiry, and that the House should have the information. The information, however, was not given until the Marquess of Ripon had come to a decision to whitewash those who were responsible for the death of the indunas. He had come to the conclusion that the Envoys were frightened and exasperated, and that, as a result, they gave some supposed cause for shooting them down. It was said that the object of getting rid of the men was that they should not carry back information as to the state of our troops, and no doubt that was the reason why they were got rid of. It was disgraceful to us to carry on this sort of warfare, or rather this sort of murder. No doubt the Marquess of Ripon was afraid to allow the House to discuss the matter before he whitewashed those who were responsible. The House, however, had been fully entitled to have the Correspondence before it before the Government came to a decision in the matter. He should vote against the expenditure of the money, because he thought the Chartered Company ought to find it, if anybody did. The poor taxpayers ought not to be called upon to find money for company promoters when the Government were always refusing money for the improvement of the country.

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes 38 ;
Noes 145.—(Division List, No. 7.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS VI.

12. £6,400, Supplementary, Superannuations and Retired Allowances, agreed to.

CLASS VII.

13. £4,500, Supplementary, Temporary Commissions, agreed to.

ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY).

14. £195,000, Supplementary, Additional Expenditure on Army Service.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) explained that the items of this Supply Estimate were required by a considerable increase in the numbers of the Militia beyond the anticipation formed at the beginning of the year : by the high price of forage owing to the drought of last summer ; and by the settlement of the price to be paid under arbitration for the purchase of Maplin Sands.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) wished to know whether it was a fact that most of the forage had come from abroad, and that the hay came from Canada, although it might have been got at the same cost from Ireland ?

*MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN said, that the Department had bought the hay where they could get it cheapest.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked how much was paid for it ?

*MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN replied that they bought hay where they could get it cheapest. So long as they could get it on any reasonable terms at all they procured it from England and Ireland. But there was some Canadian hay, although he thought not so much as had been supposed. In fact, he had seen rather strong comments upon the War Department for not having bought a great deal more Canadian hay. In 1891-2 the rations of forage worked out at slightly more than 1s. 1d. per day, in 1892-3 at slightly more than 1s. 3d., and in 1893-4 at over 1s. 5d.

MR. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, the right hon. Gentleman had told the Committee that the War Department had bought the hay where they could get it cheap, and that where they could get the English hay as cheap they bought it in this country. Did he mean that the matter was left to the contractors, or was any attempt made to ascertain that English hay could be bought in the neighbourhood as cheap as Canadian hay ? because an impression prevailed in the country that discretion was largely left to the contractor.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley) said, the greatest care had been

exercised throughout to obtain hay of the best possible quality. Every kind of hay was submitted to the severest test. Fortunately the drought of last year only affected certain localities in the country, and they were able to get hay of excellent quality from Ireland, Scotland, and the North of England. With regard to Irish hay, immediately it was found out that it was at a low price, contractors went over to Ireland and purchased it at a considerably enhanced price to the grower. But with regard to the Canadian hay, it came in most serviceably. The most stringent precautions had been taken throughout to get the best hay.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, he did not think the hon. Gentleman had quite answered the question put by the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Long), because the point which his hon. Friend put was this—that there was a danger that the contractors might have made a better price for themselves than if the Government bought locally. He would be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would tell the Committee whether they had extended the operation of buying locally.

MR. JEFFREYS pointed out that the Secretary for War had said that the hay was purchased in the cheapest markets, whereas his colleague had said that they had purchased the best hay. The hay purchased in the cheapest markets was not always the best hay. Canadian hay was notoriously the worst hay, and was very bad for young horses, and it was false economy to buy that kind of hay to feed young horses.

MR. WOODALL said, the statements made by his right hon. Friend and himself were perfectly reconcilable. Under exceptional circumstances they had had to deal strictly economically in obtaining the best article they could at the lowest price. The local purchases had been very large indeed, a considerable amount having been paid in the way of direct purchase.

Vote agreed to.

15. £100, Ordnance Factories (Supplementary) agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Mr. Woodall

STANDING ORDERS.

Ordered,—

That the Select Committee on Standing Orders do consist of Thirteen Members: Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Coddington, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Sir T. Esmonde, Mr. Halsey, Mr. James Lowther, Sir J. Lubbock, Sir J. Mowbray, Colonel Nolan, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Storey, and Mr. Whitbread were accordingly nominated Members of the Committee.—(*Sir J. Mowbray.*)

SELECTION.

Ordered,—

That the Committee of Selection do consist of Ten Members:—Sir C. Cameron, Sir J. Dorington, Mr. Halsey, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. A. Williams, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Wodehouse, and the Chairman of the Select Committee on Standing Orders were accordingly nominated Members of the Committee.—(*Sir J. Mowbray.*)

EAST INDIA (PENSIONS.)

Return [presented 13th March] to be printed. [No. 28.]

STATISTICAL ABSTRACT (FOREIGN COUNTRIES.)

Copy presented,—of Statistical Abstract for the principal and other Foreign Countries in each year from 1882 to 1891-2 (Twentieth Number) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.)

Copy presented,—of Reports on Subjects of General and Commercial Interest, No. 324 (United States, Liquor Traffic) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 4, 1894).

Copy presented,—of International Sanitary Convention. Signed at Dresden 15th April, 1893, and Protocol recording accession of Great Britain 13-15th July, 1893. Ratifications deposited at Berlin 1st February, 1894 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 5, 1894.)

Copy presented,—of Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between Great Britain and Muskat. Signed at Muskat 19th March, 1891, with a List of British Colonies which have acceded thereto under Article XXI. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 16th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition:—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

PROSECUTION UNDER THE DAY
TRESPASS ACT.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to a case tried under the Day Trespass Act at the Inverary Sheriff Court on the 23rd ultimo, in which five lads were charged with killing a rabbit on the property of Sir John Campbell Orde, and in which the charge was found not proven; whether he is aware that it transpired in evidence that Sir John Orde, as Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee of the County of Argyll, had instructed the Chief Constable of the county to obtain information through the police to prove the alleged offence, and that the Sheriff in his decision expressed his regret at the manner in which the police had interfered, and rejected their evidence; whether the action of the police in the case was contrary to the General Regulations affecting the Scottish police; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): From the inquiry which I have made, it appears that the statements in the second paragraph of the question are scarcely accurate. Sir John Orde himself had no communication with the police. His son found the accused on the ground, and, without instructions from or communication with his father, immediately went

to the police station, and handed the Chief Constable a list of their names, as given to him by them. The Chief Constable then sent a constable to Ardrishaig to verify their names, and he met and ascertained from the accused themselves what their names and designations were. The Sheriff informs me that he felt it to be his duty to reject the police constable's evidence, because he had acted wrongly in interrogating the accused without warning them that what they said might be used in evidence against them. The duty of a constable under the Day Trespass Act, as defined in the Regulations issued to the Argyllshire Constabulary, is stated to consist—

"In merely reporting any contravention of the Statute which he sees, or which may come to his knowledge, to the proprietor or lessee of the game on the lands trespassed upon during the day in search or pursuit of game,"

and this duty appears to have been exceeded in this case. I hope that the Standing Joint Committee will see that the Regulations are strictly observed in future.

DISCLOSURE OF ADMIRALTY PLANS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is the fact that copies of detail drawings of the machinery in Her Majesty's torpedo-boat destroyer *Havock* have been offered for sale; whether the person or persons so offering them have been discovered; and whether the existing law provides adequate punishment for the disclosure of such information regarding vessels of war, when constructed wholly or in part in private yards?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH Lancashire, Clitheroe): Messrs. Yarrow, the builders of the *Havock*, have made a representation to the Admiralty to the effect stated, but no proof has been furnished of the fact, nor are we aware that any offender has been discovered. The existing law is considered sufficient to meet any case of unlawful disclosure of confidential documents.

MR. HANBURY: Do the Admiralty believe that these plans have not been stolen at all?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No proof has been furnished of the fact, and the Admiralty have no information as to

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whether the drawings were stolen, lost, or what became of them.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Are the plans missing?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Messrs. Yarrow have informed the Admiralty that certain facts have become public which ought to have been regarded as confidential. Whether that is due to certain documents having been purloined we do not know.

MR. TOMLINSON: My question was, whether there are any plans missing.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Not so far as the Admiralty know.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Have the Admiralty any reason to believe that copies of these documents have been purloined?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: What we have reason to believe is this: that Messrs. Yarrow state that some copies of the plans have fallen into the hands of other people who ought not to have them.

CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY PENSIONERS.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what number of pensioners in receipt of pensions for service in the Crimean and Indian Mutiny Campaigns died during the year 1893; and whether the vacant pensions have been awarded to applicants in necessitous circumstances?

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley) (who replied), said: Out of the special campaign pensioners on the fixed establishment of £10,000 a year, 31 died during the year 1893. The pensions which thus became available have all been awarded to candidates in necessitous circumstances.

ALLEGED CORRUPT PRACTICES BY A WIGAN MAGISTRATE.

MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he is aware that Mr. Richard Johnson, who was placed upon the Commission of the Peace for the County by him last year, and is also a Justice of the Peace for the Borough of Wigan, has been reported as guilty of corrupt practices at a municipal election in that town; and whether it is

intended to take any steps in consequence of the finding of the Commissioner?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I have seen in a newspaper a statement that the Commissioner who tried an Election Petition at Wigan announced that he proposed to report Mr. Johnson, who is a County Councillor and a Justice of the Peace; but I am as yet entirely without official information on the subject, and do not even know whether a Report has been made. Until I receive such information it is, of course, impossible for me to consider whether any, and what, steps should be taken.

MR. LEGH: Was not Mr. Johnson, as Chairman of the Radical Party in Wigan, frequently consulted by the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the appointment of other Magistrates?

MR. TOMLINSON: The right hon. Gentleman has not fully answered the question whether Mr. Johnson was not placed on the Commission of the Peace by him?

MR. BRYCE: I understood that that question was answered by my not contradicting the statement made by the hon. Member. All communications which pass between other persons and myself with regard to the appointment of Justices of the Peace are entirely of a confidential nature. I never have stated in any case whatever, and therefore I cannot state in this case either, whether or not I consulted this gentleman or any other gentleman.

INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT.

SIR J. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government will consider the possibility of coming to an International understanding, either by a Conference or otherwise, as to the relative strength at which the armaments of the respective nations should be maintained, with a view to checking the vast and ever-growing military and naval expenditure, which is now crippling the commercial resources and impoverishing the population of every civilised country?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Her Majesty's Government would be

Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth

quite ready to consider and to support any practical proposals for arriving at such an understanding, but they fear that an initiation on their part would at present have no useful result.

THE WORKING OF THE EDUCATION ACT IN SCOTLAND.

MR. JACKS (Stirlingshire) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware of the hardship caused to the industrial classes in Scotland, whose trade renders it necessary to remove frequently from place to place, by their children often losing the credit of several months' attendance, from requiring to leave before the end of a term; and that, in some cases, as much as two years' attendance, which they have given, is not credited to them, under present arrangements; and if he can undertake to introduce some schedule whereby proof of attendance will accompany the child from school to school, so as to release the parents from the loss caused by the present system?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) (who replied) said : I think the hon. Member is under some misapprehension. Formerly, when a certain number of attendances were necessary in order to qualify a scholar for presentation, and a grant upon examination, the hardship of which he complains might have arisen. But under the present system all the attendances made by any scholar in a school during any part of a school year are counted towards the grant to that school, and the scholar is not prejudiced, as he supposes, by a change of school.

MR. JACKS : If I give cases will the right hon. Gentleman inquire?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : Certainly.

MR. JACKS : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware of the loss caused to the industrial classes in Scotland, whose trade makes it necessary for them frequently to change from place to place, by each School Board district having different books for the various standards; and if he will adopt such measures as will make it compulsory for a uniform book being used in the various standards in every Board school in Scotland?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : I regret that inconvenience should be caused by dif-

ferent districts; and would be glad if the local School Authorities could do anything to lessen it. But the Department has always refrained from restricting the discretion of School Authorities in the choice of books; and I am unable to make any such compulsory Rule as the hon. Member suggests.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) : Have the Board power to enforce payment for books? Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to make the law clear on that point?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : I should prefer that this question, on so extremely delicate and important a point, should be given notice of.

MR. DALZIEL : I will put it on Tuesday.

IRISH MAGISTRATES.

MR. M'GILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that there are only 63 Magistrates usually resident in the County of Fermanagh, and 22 non-resident; of the total number (85) 73 are Protestants, 3 Methodists, and 9 Roman Catholics; if, also, 51 are composed of landed proprietors, land agents, Naval, Military, and Militia officers; also that a large number of names of qualified gentlemen have been submitted for the approval of the Lord Chancellor, accompanied with a request for their appointment as Magistrates, from the districts of Lisnaskea, Brookboro, Lettercreen, and other places in Fermanagh; and that on several occasions a Court of Petty Sessions could not be held in Brookboro, Newtownbutler, and other districts in Fermanagh, owing to the non-attendance of Magistrates; and are there any steps likely to be taken, and when, to remedy the condition of this Bench?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : It is the fact that there are only 63 Magistrates usually resident in the County of Fermanagh and 22 non-resident. Of the total number (85) 73 are Protestants, three Methodists, and nine Roman Catholics; also 51 are composed of landed proprietors, land agents, Naval, Military, and Militia officers. On one occasion during the year 1893 there was no Court of Petty Sessions held at Brookboro owing to the

absence of Magistrates ; on another occasion there was no Magistrate in attendance at Newtownbutler ; and at Irvines-town the business of Petty Sessions fell through on four occasions in the same period and for the same reason. Five Magistrates have been appointed within the last few days, and of these two can sit at Newtownbutler, two at Lettergreen, one at Brookboro, and one at Lisnaska. The Lord Chancellor has informed me that he hopes very shortly to be able to make some additional appointments.

INDIAN RAILWAY CONTRACTS.

SIR A. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to a statement made upon the business card of Monsieur Guido Cloes, the London agent of the Belgian firm Les Usines and Fonderies De Baume and Marpent Company, and widely distributed amongst buyers of railway material in this country, to the effect that they have supplied 10,000 axle boxes to the Indian State Railways ; and whether, if incorrect, he will give a positive and authoritative contradiction, in order to prevent that statement continuing to be used as evidence of quality, and in order to induce English buyers to give their orders abroad ?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) : No contract has ever been given to Les Usines and Fonderies De Baume and Marpent Company for axle boxes for Indian State railways ; but it has now been ascertained by inquiry from the agent of that company that 9,356 axle boxes were manufactured by them for M. Valère Mabilie, to whom two orders for axle boxes for Indian State railways were given in the year 1884. The first order for 8,100 was given to M. Valère Mabilie after an open competition, in which his tender for delivery in London was the lowest. A smaller order was subsequently added after a second competition. I may mention that, after the order in question had been given, Lord Kimberley, who was Secretary of State at the time, laid down a new Rule, the object and effect of which was to secure that no order should be placed abroad except for special or urgent reasons.

Mr. J. Morley

INDIAN TARIFF BILL.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, before the promised Debate on Indian Finance, he will have copies of the Correspondence and telegrams between the Secretary of State and Government of India on the subject of the Tariff Bill printed and circulated, together with a full report of the Debate on the Bill in the Viceroy's Council on 10th March ?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER : I shall endeavour before the Debate to lay on the Table of the House the Correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Government of India on the subject of the Tariff Bill, as well as the Official Report of the Debates in the Legislative Council, if received.

OVERTIME ON ADMIRALTY CONTRACT WORK.

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, S.E., Ince) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether Messrs. Thornycroft, of Chiswick, torpedo boat builders, have frequent contracts with Her Majesty's Government ; if he is aware that at these works systematic overtime is being worked ; and whether the Government will cause a clause to be inserted in all future contracts, restricting the hours of labour to the number now being worked in the Government works, as a condition of accepting their contracts ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : Messrs. Thornycroft have frequently contracted for the Admiralty. I am told that some overtime has recently been going on at their works. No proposal to impose a condition as to hours of labour in Admiralty contracts has been before the Government.

HARLAND AND WOLFF'S SHIPYARD.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the platers' helpers and the labourers employed in the engine, boiler, and foundry shops in Messrs. Harland and Wolff's shipyard, Belfast, to the number of 770, are on strike for an advance of wages ; whether the wages earned by these men, and that when in full employment, ranged from 12s. to 18s. per week ; whether any of them were employed in connection

with Government contracts; and whether the Admiralty in giving out contracts will make it a condition that all unskilled labourers be paid a minimum rate of 6d. per hour?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No Admiralty contracts are in process of execution by this firm, nor have we any knowledge on the statements in the hon. Member's question. The condition as to wages introduced in all Admiralty contracts is not that suggested by the hon. Member's question, but in accordance with the House of Commons Resolution, as follows:—

"The wages paid in the execution of this contract shall be those generally accepted as current in each trade for competent workmen in the district where the work is carried out."

THE MARGARINE ACT.

MR. H. PLUNKETT (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he will consider the advisability of appointing a Departmental Committee to inquire into the working of "The Margarine Act, 1887," and "The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," as it affects the manufacture and sale of butter; and whether, in view of the recent prosecution at Manchester, the terms of Reference to such Committee should include the question of excessive water in butter?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The case to which the hon. Member refers has engaged my attention, and I have addressed a communication respecting it to the Local Government Board, within whose province the consideration of questions arising under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts mainly rests. If it be the general desire of British producers that such an inquiry as that suggested by the hon. Member should be instituted, I would certainly bring that desire to the notice of the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board, who may be regarded as the representatives of the interests of distributors and consumers; but I could not properly appoint a Committee without the concurrence of those two Departments.

DUTIES OF COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE BURGHS.

MR. MAXWELL (Dumfries-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland

whether the Commissioners of Police Burghs, created under "The Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892," are entitled to undertake the management and maintenance of the highways within the burgh in terms of "The Roads and Streets in Police Burghs (Scotland) Act, 1891"; and whether the Commissioners of such police burghs participate in the grants made under "The Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890," and under "The Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892"; and, if not, whether he proposes by provisions in the Local Government Bill to put such police burghs in the same position as those formed under "The General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act, 1862"?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The answer to the first part of the hon. Member's question is in the negative. The police burghs created under the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892, do not participate as police burghs in the grants referred to in the second part of the question, and this point is at present under the consideration of the Government in connection with the Local Government Act Amendment Bill.

H.M.S. "CRESCENT."

MR. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the new first-class cruiser *Crescent* has twice had to put back to Portsmouth on her first voyage owing to defects in her engines; what is the nature of those defects; and whether it is intended to continue the attempt to send out relief crews in her to the Australian Station before a more complete examination and test of her machinery have been made than that which was made before the second breakdown?

***SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH:** It is the fact that the *Crescent* has had to put back on two occasions owing to defects in her machinery (in each case the fracture of an excentric). A thorough re-examination of the machinery has now been carried out by the Admiralty officers, in concert with the manufacturers of the engines, and the excentrics are being renewed and refitted. The work will be completed in the course of a few days, and thorough full-power trial will be made before the *Crescent* leaves for Australia.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Was the *Crescent* before she started subjected to the usual steam trials? If so, how is it these defects were not discovered?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: She went through the usual trials before being commissioned.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Was she tested to her full capacity?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I have no doubt she was.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): Were the engines manufactured by the Government, or by a private firm?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: By a private firm.

THE LEE-METFORD RIFLE.

MR. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what steps have yet been taken for supplying the Navy with Lee-Metford rifles; and what orders for them, if any, have been given to the Government factories and to private firms respectively?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Arrangements have been made for arming the Marines with the magazine rifle during 1894-95, and the cost has been inserted in the Estimates. No orders have yet been given.

INDIAN FISCAL POLICY.

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the resolution of the Government to exempt cotton from the duties which the Viceroy has resolved to impose on other goods was taken with the assent of any of the Council at Westminster, or of a majority of that body; and whether any members have recorded Minutes of dissent on the subject; and, if so, whether those Minutes can be laid before Parliament?

MR. WICKHAM (Hants, Petersfield): At the same time, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is the fact that the Council of India were unanimously opposed to the decision of the Secretary of State excluding duties upon cotton goods from the Import Duties which the Governor General in Council has been recently authorised to impose in order to meet the present financial crisis in India; and if he will object to a Motion for copies of any dissents from that deci-

sion which may have been recorded by Members of the Council of India?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The answer to questions Nos. 11 and 28 is that the resolution of the Government not to impose a duty on cotton imported into India was not taken with the assent of the Council of India. Dissents have been recorded by certain Members of the Council, which will be laid upon the Table if moved for.

DERELICTS IN THE ATLANTIC.

MR. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the American Government has yet sent a reply to the statement made in this House on 12th January last by the late Prime Minister with respect to derelict ships; what is the purport of that reply; and will he communicate it to the House?

*SIR E. GREY: The reply was received on the 25th of January last, and is still under the consideration of the Board of Trade. It is to the effect that no scheme at present exists in the United States for patrolling ocean routes for the purpose of removing derelicts, &c., although they are destroyed by United States vessels of war when heard of; but that the United States Government are prepared to invite the principal Maritime Governments to consider an International Agreement on the subject.

THE COST OF THE CENSUS.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can state what was the annual cost of the preliminary work performed before the last Census in carrying into effect the alterations caused in areas and boundaries by the operation of various Acts of Parliament; whether he can state the difference (if any) between the Census Vote and the estimated actual cost of taking the last Census; and whether, having regard to the numerous alterations continually being made in the boundaries of various areas, it is proposed, in accordance with the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on the Census, to take the necessary steps to insure the continuity of the Census by having these alterations in boundaries carried out in the Census Returns as soon as possible after they

come into operation, in order that the population of the new or altered areas may be available?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): I am informed by the Registrar General that for nearly four years before the last Census was taken two clerks were employed at an annual cost of about £240 in noting changes of areas and boundaries effected by the Divided Parishes Acts of 1876 and 1882. The difference between the amount voted for taking the Census in 1891 and tabulating the results and the expenditure will be a surplus of about £19,000. The best way of keeping abreast of these constantly occurring changes in areas is now under consideration in the General Register Office.

MUSKETRY EXAMINATION PAPERS.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Cardarthen, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the authorities in the School of Musketry at Hythe have refused to send an officer's examination papers to his commanding officer when officially applied for, and whether there is any valid reason for such refusal; whether it is usual at Hythe to refuse an officer a musketry certificate for reasons other than ignorance of the subjects in which he is examined; and whether he can state the percentage of failures to pass the examination under each instructor of musketry at Hythe during the past 12 months, and the names of the instructors who examined the greatest number of officers who failed to obtain a certificate?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): It is contrary to the Regulation to disclose examination papers. If a commanding officer of a regiment has a complaint to make of the procedure of the School of Musketry his duty is to submit the case to the Adjutant General through his General commanding.

THE CASE OF MR. WELD O'CONNOR.

MR. GIBNEY (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Matthew Weld O'Connor, J.P., of Oldcastle, County Meath, Receiver to

the Court of Chancery of the Estate of W. S. Garnett, was deficient in his accounts in the sum of £2,000; that he represented this to have arisen through an auctioneer owing him that sum for the proceeds of the grass lettings; and that on inquiry before the Chief Receiver of the Land Judges Court it was ascertained that no such money was due by the auctioneer, nor was any found to be due, the auctioneer having produced his receipts; whether Mr. O'Connor was dismissed or called on to resign; and, if not, on what grounds; is it the intention of the Government to prosecute him; does he at present hold any other receiverships, and will he be continued therein; is Mr. O'Connor the same receiver who in July, 1890, was dismissed after judgment in Court by Judge Munroe for falsifying his accounts in the King's Estate, and why was he then retained on the list of receivers; and, in view of the fact that Mr. O'Connor is a Magistrate for the Counties of Meath, Cavan, and Longford, has the attention of the Lord Chancellor been called to his conduct?

MR. J. MORLEY: The attention of the Lord Chancellor has not been called to any of the matters referred to, nor is he aware whether any of the statements are correct, as such matters are exclusively within the cognisance of the Receiver Judge, over whom the Executive has no control. If Mr. O'Connor's conduct as a Magistrate should be called in question, the Lord Chancellor has no doubt that the Judge will furnish him with any information that may be required.

COTTERIDGE SCHOOL, WORCESTERSHIRE.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education under what circumstances and for what reasons has the usual grant been withheld from the Cotteridge School in Worcestershire?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The offices of this school, which were in a bad state, were commenced last year. Plans of new offices were approved last August, but they had not been built at the time of the inspection in February. The Department has

now received assurance from the managers that the work will be executed at once, and the grant has been put forward.

BREACH OF THE FACTORY ACT.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Burnley) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the report of a case heard at the Borough Police Court, Preston, on Saturday the 24th of February last, when a certain firm of cotton manufacturers were charged under Section 24 of "The Factory and Workshops Act, 1891," with failing to supply to certain weavers in their employ sufficient particulars with their work to enable them to ascertain the rate of wages at which they were entitled to be paid for the work, when the Magistrates held that a sign or symbol, which no one but the employer and his manager understood, was sufficient, and might be used instead of plain characters; and if it is competent for the Magistrates to insist, as in this case, upon the Inspector or witnesses stating whether the persons whom the employer is charged with failing to supply sufficient particulars to have complained or not, or even if they have felt aggrieved or are dissatisfied?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : My attention has been drawn to this case with a view to the amendment of the law if necessary. Mr. Birtwistle has received instructions that if such questions should be again asked in any case—namely, from whom he received information, or if one of his witnesses is asked whether he or she gave information to Mr. Birtwistle, he should very respectfully submit to the Court that to answer such questions would be contrary to public policy.

BRITISH CLAIMS AGAINST CHILI.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Chilian Council of State has approved the ratification of the Convention between Great Britain and Chili for the constitution of a tribunal for settling the claims of British subjects arising out of the Civil War of 1891; if so, will this extend to the claims of British subjects serving on board American or other vessels; is he aware that, on the ground that certain

Irishmen were British subjects, the Chilian Government rejected their claims when put forward by the United States; has the attention of the Foreign Office has been called to the case of Patrick Shields, a seaman on the American steamer *Keweenaw*, and what is the position of his claim; is he aware that he was so brutally beaten by the police of Valparaiso that he is a hopeless invalid for life, and is unable to earn a living; and that the case of Andrew McKinstry, another seaman on the steamer *Keweenaw* was dismissed by the Commission on the ground that neither were American citizens; does the Treaty lately negotiated between Chili and Great Britain and Ireland provide for the settlement of British claims under a Joint Commission, which will sit for one year, with an extension of six months if the year should prove too short; and will the Government insist on reparation in these cases? Before putting the question I should like to state that when I handed it in at the Table it contained portions of the Message of President Harrison to Congress on the treatment of the British subjects referred to. Is it out of Order to quote such an expression of opinion on the Paper of the House?

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Quotations are ruled out of Order, because hon. Members who make them are giving information instead of asking for it.

*SIR E. GREY: The ratification of the Convention between Great Britain and Chili has been approved by both Chambers of Congress, but we have not yet heard of its ratification by the Council of State, which only met on the 10th instant. It will deal with

"all claims for which the Government of Chili may be held responsible in view of the acts and operations executed by land and sea forces of the Republic"

during the recent Civil War, and such claims as are presented must, in order to be entertained, be supported by Her Majesty's Legation at Santiago. We have at present no knowledge of the cases of Patrick Shields and Andrew McKinstry, and their claims should be at once sent in to the Foreign Office for consideration. The answer to the penultimate paragraph is in the affirmative. In the event of these claims being submitted to the Commission, its decision as to the reparation which is to be given must,

under the terms of the Convention, be accepted as final by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Up to what day will the Foreign Office receive claims?

*SIR E. GREY: I cannot give the date, and I am not aware that any day has been fixed. Certain formalities have to be gone through before the Commission meets.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I wish to state that, on further consideration, the Government has come to the conclusion that if business progresses next week according to the scheme which I suggested to the House a day or two ago they will be able to read the Ways and Means Bill a third time on Saturday. If that is done they will be able to dispense with the attendance of the House on the Monday after Easter, which no doubt will be a great convenience to Members, and especially to the officers of the House.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): What day will be given in lieu of the day for Motions on going into Committee on the Civil Service Estimates?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am not in a position to fix the day yet.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): What will be the Business for the week after Easter?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Thursday in that week is the day fixed for giving the Royal Assent to the Ways and Means Bill.

NEW WRITS.

For the County of Berwick, *v.* the Right Hon. Edward Marjoribanks, called up to the House of Peers.

For the County of Montgomery, *v.* Stuart Rendel, esquire, Manor of Northstead.

MOTIONS.

LAND TENURE (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Kilbride, Bill to amend the Law relating to the fixing of fair rents, and the Tenure and Purchase of Land in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Kilbride, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. William O'Brien.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 7.]

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Nolan, Bill to repeal "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Colonel Nolan, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Harrington, Dr. Kenny, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Field, Mr. Maguire, and Mr. William Redmond.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 8.]

OLD AGE PENSIONS BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Palmer, Bill to provide Pensions in Old Age to the provident poor, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Palmer, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Fisher, and Sir Frederick Seager Hunt.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 9.]

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Roby, Bill to restrict the hours in Mines to Eight Hours per day, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Roby, Mr. Abraham, Mr. John Burns, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Cremer, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Leake, Mr. Pickard, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Ernest Spencer, and Mr. Woods.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 10.]

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bartley, Bill to amend the Law respecting the transfer and exercise of Church Patronage and the avoidance of benefices, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bartley, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Sir Richard Webster, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Viscount Cranborne, Mr. Talbot, Mr. Jebb, Viscount Wolmer, Sir Francis Powell, and Mr. Griffith-Boscawen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 11.]

UNIFORMS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Farquharson, Bill to regulate and restrict the wearing of Naval and Military Uniforms, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Farquharson, Mr. Brookfield, Mr. Hanbury, Major Rasch, and Captain Norton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 12.]

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND)

AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Thomas B. Curran, Bill to amend the Law relating to Municipal Franchise in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thomas B. Curran, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Condon, Mr. Crean, and Mr. O'Keeffe.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 13.]

OUTDOOR RELIEF (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Strachey, Bill to empower Boards of Guardians to grant Relief to Members of Friendly Societies in receipt of any allowances from the same, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Strachey, Mr. Barlow, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Charles Hobhouse, and Mr. Howell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 14.]

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Bill to amend the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Flynn, Dr. Tanner, Captain Donelan, and Mr. Roche.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 15.]

BEER ADULTERATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Round, Bill for better securing the purity of Beer, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Round, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Mr. Fellowes, and Mr. Griffith-Boscawen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 16.]

GUARDIANS OF THE POOR (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Gilhooly, Bill to amend the Law relating to the election and constitution of Boards of Guardians of the Poor in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gilhooly, Mr. Bodkin, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Condon, and Mr. Finucane.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 17.]

PATENT AGENTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Alban Gibbs, Bill to amend the Law relating to Patent Agents, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Alban Gibbs, Sir Reginald Hanson, Mr. W. F. D. Smith, Mr. Kimber, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Birrell, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 18.]

LAND LAW (IRELAND) AND PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Clancy, Bill to amend the Land Law (Ireland) and Purchase of Land (Ireland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Clancy, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Harrington, and Mr. Hayden.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 19.]

TOWN HOLDINGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Bill to give compensation to occupying tenants of Town Holdings for beneficial improvements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. David Thomas, Mr. Field, Mr. George Palmer, and Earl Compton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 20.]

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Coddington, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Rating of hereditaments containing machinery, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Coddington, Mr. Holland, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Sir Bernard Samuelson, Mr. Maher, Mr. Tomlinson, Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Smith Wright, and Mr. Strachey.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 21.]

COMPULSORY VACCINATION ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hopwood, Bill to abolish the compulsion to Vaccinate, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hopwood, Mr. Channing, Mr. Byles, and Dr. Clark.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 22.]

COMPANIES ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir William Houldsworth, Bill to amend "The Companies Act, 1862," ordered to be brought in by Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Howell, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Harrop Sidebottom, and Mr. Cheetham.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 23.]

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Webb, Bill to repeal "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Webb, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Sexton, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Captain Donelan, and Mr. Young.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 24.]

LABOUR MINISTER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ernest Spencer, Bill to establish a Ministry of Labour to be presided over by a Minister to be called the Labour Minister, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ernest Spencer, Sir Alfred Hickman, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir John Blundell Maple, Sir Seymour King, Sir Joseph Pease, Colonel Howard Vincent, Mr. Dalziel, and Mr. Wilson Lloyd.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 25.]

MUSIC AND DANCING LICENCES (MIDDLESEX) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Howard, Bill to amend the Law as regards Music and Dancing Licences in Middlesex, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Howard, Mr. Bigwood, Captain Bowles, and Mr. Stephens.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 26.]

BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Banbury, Bill to amend the Law relating to Building Societies, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Banbury, Mr. Gerald Balfour, and Mr. Bartley.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 27.]

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Kenny, Bill to amend the Law relating to Municipal Franchises in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Kenny, Mr. Harrington, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Field, and Mr. Clancy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 28.]

PAUPERS DEPORTATION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Flynn, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Deportation of Paupers from Great Britain to Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Flynn, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Captain Donelan, and Mr. Gilhooly.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 29.]

TOWN PARKS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Captain Donelan, Bill to amend the Law relating to Town Parks in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Captain Donelan, Mr. Edward Barry, Mr. Flynn, and Mr. Tuite.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 30.]

DEEP SEA FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Mains, Bill to facilitate the Development of the Deep Sea Fisheries of Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mains, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. Sheehy, Dr. Commins, and Mr. Gilhooly.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 31.]

IRISH LIGHTS BOARD CONSTITUTION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Finucane, Bill to amend the constitution of the Irish Lights Board, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Finucane, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Crean, and Mr. O'Keeffe.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 32.]

BURIALS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Carvell Williams, Bill to further amend the Burial Laws, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Carvell Williams, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Perks, and Mr. Barrow.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 33.]

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL MEAT BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. Acland-Hood, Bill to regulate the Marking and Sale of Foreign and Colonial Meat, ordered to be brought in by Sir A. Acland-Hood, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Horace Plunkett, Mr. Jeffreys, and Colonel Lockwood.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 34.]

GROUND GAME ACT (1880) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Billson, Bill to amend "The Ground Game Act, 1880," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Billson, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Luttrell, and Mr. Cobb.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 35.]

OLD AGE PENSIONS (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Captain Naylor-Leyland, Bill to establish voluntary State-aided Old Age Pensions, ordered to be brought in by Captain Naylor-Leyland and Mr. Round.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 36.]

FRUIT IDENTIFICATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hozier, Bill for the Identification and Regulation of the Sale of Foreign and Colonial Fruit, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hozier, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. Akers-Douglas, and Mr. Griffith-Boscawen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 37.]

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Bill to provide for certificates for Persons in Charge of Steam Engines and Boilers, ordered, to be brought in by Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. Howell, Mr. Charles Fenwick, and Mr. Joseph Wilson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 38.]

COMMONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Bill for the better regulation and preservation of Commons and Village Greens, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Mr. Byrne, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Bonsor, and Mr. Lawson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 39.]

CROFTERS HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir William Wedderburn, Bill for the amendment and extension of the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Sir William Wedderburn, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Crombie, and Mr. Seymour Keay.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 40.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (RETURNING OFFICERS) (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Tuite, Bill to amend the Law relating to the expenses of Returning Officers at Parliamentary Elections in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tuite, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Captain Donelan, Mr. Maurice Healy, and Mr. Flynn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 41.]

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Luttrell, Bill to amend the Law in regard to the appointment, qualification, and removal of Justices of the Peace, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Luttrell, Mr. Billson, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Howell, Mr. Lambert, and Mr. Owen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 42.]

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC ACT (1888) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir James Whitehead, Bill to amend "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," ordered to be brought in by Sir James Whitehead, Mr. Richardson, Sir Alfred Hickman, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Burnie, and Mr. Patrick M'Hugh.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 43.]

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN PREVENTION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Richard Webster, Bill to amend the Law for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, ordered to be brought in by Sir Richard Webster, Mr. Greene, Mr. Bucknill, Mr. Byrne, and Mr. Cohen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 44.]

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL MEAT (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jeffreys, Bill for the marking of Foreign and Colonial Meat, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jeffreys, Sir A. Acland-Hood, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Fellowes, Mr. Hozier, and Mr. Horace Plunkett.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 45.]

POOR RELIEF (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hayden, Bill for the amendment of the Law for the Relief of the Poor in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hayden, Mr. John Redmond, Colonel Nolan, Mr. Clancy, and Mr. Harrington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 46.]

FACTORS' ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Greene, Bill to amend "The Factors' Act, 1889," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Greene, Mr. Brynmor Jones, and Mr. Arthur O'Connor.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 47.]

RELIGIOUS TESTS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Bill to abolish Religious Tests in connection with the office of Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Mr. Crean, Mr. Tully, and Mr. Pinkerton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 48.]

LONDON MARKETS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Samuel Montagu, Bill to enable the London County Council to purchase Spitalfields Market and Covent Garden Market, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Samuel Montagu, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Pickersgill, Sir Albert Rollit, and Mr. James Stuart.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 49.]

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (WALES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bowen Rowlands, Bill to enable owners and occupiers in Wales to have effectual control over the Liquor Traffic, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bowen Rowlands, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Rowland Jones, Mr. Abel Thomas, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, and Mr. Burnie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 50.]

INTOXICATING LIQUORS LOCAL VETO (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. William Johnston, Bill to enable the ratepayers of any locality to veto the

issue of Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Johnston, Mr. Jordan, Lord Arthur Hill, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Diamond, and Mr. Wolff.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 51.]

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to provide for the Earlier Closing of Shops, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Field, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Mather, Mr. Austin, and Mr. Kearley.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 52.]

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Henry Roscoe, Bill to amend the Law relating to Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, ordered to be brought in by Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Leake, Mr. Mather, and Mr. Roundell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 53.]

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Richard Temple, Bill to regulate the conditions under which Children are exempted from Attendance at School, ordered to be brought in by Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Howard, Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Price, and Mr. Dodd.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 54.]

LAND VALUES (TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Naoroji, Bill to provide for the taxation of Land Values by Local Authorities, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Naoroji, Mr. Lough, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. James Rowlands.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 55.]

COTTON TRADE (FORTY- EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Maden, Bill to restrict the hours of labour in the Cotton Trade to Forty-Eight per week, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Maden, Mr. Philip Stanhope, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Burnie, and Mr. Woods.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 56.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Howell, Bill to consolidate, simplify, and amend the Law relating to Parliamentary Elections; and for other purposes relating thereto, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Howell, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Stewart Wallace, Dr. Hunter, Mr. Bowen Rowlands, and Mr. Warmington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 57.]

**TRUSTEE ACT (1893) AMENDMENT
BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. William Kenny, Bill to amend "The Trustee Act, 1893," ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Kenny, Mr. Carson, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Ross, and Mr. Clancy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 58.]

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jesse Collings, Bill for giving Industrial Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Robert Reid, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Dixon, and Sir Richard Paget.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 59.]

LIBEL BILL.

On Motion of Sir Albert Rollit, Bill to amend the Law of Libel, ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. Willox, Mr. Byles, Colonel Palmer, Sir John Leng, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and Sir Charles Cameron.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 60.]

FOREIGN GOODS (MARK OF ORIGIN) BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Howard Vincent, Bill for the placing of a Mark of Origin on Foreign Goods, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Howard Vincent, Sir Henry Howorth, Mr. William Johnston, Mr. Maclure, Colonel Bridgeman, Colonel Brookfield, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Havelock Wilson, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Field, and Mr. Wrightson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 61.]

FIRE BRIGADES (EXEMPTION FROM JURY SERVICE) BILL.

On Motion of Viscount Curzon, Bill to exempt Members of Fire Brigades from Service on Juries, ordered to be brought in by Viscount Curzon, Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Baird, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 62.]

**LIVERPOOL CORPORATION CHURCHES
BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Snape, Bill to remove the obligations imposed by Statute upon the Liverpool Corporation to maintain wholly or in part certain Clergymen, Church Officers, and Churches in Liverpool, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Snape, Mr. Neville, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Stephen Williamson, Mr. Herbert Lewis, and Mr. Brunner.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 63.]

MINING ACCIDENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Baird, Bill to establish a system of National Insurance against Accidents

in Mines in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Baird, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Parker Smith, and Mr. Cochrane.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 64.]

FOREIGN SHELL FISH BILL.

On Motion of Major Rasch, Bill for labelling and marking consignments and parcels of shrimps, mussels, and oysters of Foreign catch and preparation, ordered to be brought in by Major Rasch, Colonel Howard Vincent, Mr. Round, Mr. Field, Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, and Colonel Brookfield.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 65.]

TRADE DISPUTES (ARBITRATION) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Butcher, Bill to establish Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration in Trade Disputes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Butcher, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Horace Plunkett, and Colonel Palmer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 66.]

CORONERS ACT (1887) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Captain Grice-Hutchinson, Bill to amend "The Coroners Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Captain Grice-Hutchinson, Mr. Albert Bright, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Godson, Mr. Brooke Robinson, and Captain Norton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 67.]

**ITINERANT STREET MUSIC (LONDON)
BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Jacoby, Bill to license and control Itinerant Street Musicians in London, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jacoby, Sir Thomas Roe, Mr. Arnold-Forster, General Goldsworthy, Mr. Samuel Smith, and Mr. William Sidebotham.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 68.]

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND REFERENCE
BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Thorburn, Bill to provide for the reference of the question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland to the Parliamentary Electors of Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thorburn, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Parker Smith, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Cochrane, Mr. Baird, and Mr. Maxwell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 69.]

**LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL VETO)
(ENGLAND) BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bill to enable Localities by a direct Vote to prevent the issue of licences, ordered to be brought in by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Allison, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Mr. Allen, Mr. Benn, Mr. Billson, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Snape, and Mr. Whittaker.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 70.]

SMALLER DWELLINGS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Alexander Cross, Bill to amend the Law relating to the letting and tenure of Smaller Dwellings in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Alexander Cross, Sir James Carmichael, Mr. Baird, and Mr. McGilligan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 71.]

TRAMWAYS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Schwann, Bill to enable municipalities to work and levy tolls on their own Tramways, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Schwann, Mr. Addison, Mr. Neville, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), and Mr. Havelock Wilson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 72.]

PLACES OF WORSHIP, ETC. (RATING) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Clarence Smith, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Rating of Places of Worship and Schools, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Clarence Smith, Mr. Clough, Mr. Owen, and Mr. Perks.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 73.]

MARRIAGES (ATTENDANCE OF REGISTRARS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Perks, Bill to amend the Law relating to the attendance of Registrars at Marriages in Nonconformist Places of Worship, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Perks, Sir Isaac Holden, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Oldroyd, Mr. Snape, Mr. Spicer, and Mr. Waddy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 74.]

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wrightson, Bill to give facilities for the acquisition by Working Men of their own Dwelling Houses, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wrightson, Sir John Gorst, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Alfred Hickman, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Bartley.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 75.]

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Stern, Bill for facilitating the operation of "The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890," in so far as it relates to rural sanitary districts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Stern, Mr. Channing, Mr. Logan, and Mr. H. L. W. Lawson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 76.]

PEERS DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Brodrick, Bill to remove the disabilities of Peers on succeeding to their titles in respect of sitting in the House of Commons, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Curzon, and Viscount Wolmer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 77.]

POLICE (METROPOLIS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. James Rowlands, Bill for placing the Police of the Metropolis under the control of the ratepayers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Howell, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Pickersgill, and Mr. Naoroji.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 78.]

PUBLIC BUILDINGS (LONDON) BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Hughes, Bill to enable London Local Authorities to acquire freehold land for Public Buildings, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Hughes, Sir John Lubbock, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Jacoby, and Mr. Bousfield.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 79.]

VEHICLES LIGHTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Webster, Bill to regulate the use of Lights on conveyances after dark, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Webster, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Charles McLaren, Mr. Grice-Hutchinson, Mr. Graham, Mr. Bowen Rowlands, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, and Mr. Banbury.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 80.]

MARKET GARDENERS COMPENSATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Edmund Lechmere, Bill to extend the provisions of "The Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883," so far as they relate to Market Gardens, ordered to be brought in by Sir Edmund Lechmere, Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Maguire.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 81.]

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Bill to enable owners and occupiers in burghs, wards of burghs, parishes, and districts in Scotland, to prevent the common sale of intoxicating liquors, or otherwise to have effectual control over the drink traffic within such areas, ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Sir Charles Cameron, Sir Leonard Lyell, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Dr. Clark, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 82.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Thomas Lea, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in Ireland on Saturday and Sunday; and for other purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Sir Thomas Lea, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Jordan, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Diamond, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Webb, Mr. William Kenny, and Mr. Kennedy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 83.]

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Knowles, Bill for the National Registration of Plumbers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Knowles, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Earl Compton, Mr. Dixon, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Bowen Rowlands, and Mr. Sexton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 84.]

TRAMWAYS AND PUBLIC COMPANIES (IRELAND) ACT (1883) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Tully, Bill to amend "The Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tully, Mr. Knox, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Patrick M'Hugh, and Mr. M'Gilligan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 85.]

FARM SERVANTS' HOLIDAY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Napier, Bill for providing statutory Holidays and Half-Holidays for Farm Servants and Agricultural Labourers in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Napier and Dr. Clark.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 86.]

DERELICT VESSELS (REPORTS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macdona, Bill for the reporting to and publication by Lloyd's of intelligence as to Derelict Vessels on the high seas, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Macdona, Mr. Hozier, Sir Edward Harland, Mr. Wolff, Mr. Alban Gibbs, Mr. Round, Mr. Havelock Wilson, and Mr. Penn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 87.]

BISHOPRIC OF BRISTOL ACT (1884) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Bill to amend "The Bishopric of Bristol Act, 1884," ordered to be brought in by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Sir Edward Hill.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 88.]

MR. SETON-KARR wished to ask whether it was not competent for him now to introduce his Bill with other hon. Members, he having given notice of the Bill on Monday, and his name appearing in the Ballot? He understood from the arrangement come to between the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition that notice given on Monday would be good, and on the faith of that understanding he did not repeat his notice, but his name appeared in the Ballot, and he respectfully submitted that he had a right to bring in his Bill now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I think not. The hon. Member must give fresh notice, as he omitted to take the necessary step.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

NAVAL AND MILITARY DEFENSIVE PREPARATIONS.

RESOLUTION.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I rise to call attention to the close relation which should exist between our Naval and our Military defensive preparations, and to move—

"That this House, before voting supplies for the maintenance of Military establishments in the United Kingdom, seeks an assurance from Her Majesty's Government that the Estimates for that purpose submitted to it are framed upon consideration of the needs of possible war by sea and land, and upon a consideration of advice tendered in that behalf by such Officer of each Service as is fitted to command in war Her Majesty's forces of that Service."

If the Statement of the Secretary for War, which was issued yesterday, had been of the character of the Statement issued by the First Lord of the Admiralty to us yesterday, there would not have been any reason for making much of a statement in support of the Motion, which might have been allowed in that case to stand by itself. But the Statement of the Secretary for War is not in the nature of the Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty lays down principles with regard to the management of the Navy for this year, and to some extent for the future, and is based upon a clear and fresh consideration of the needs of the country—a consideration which may be wise or unwise, which may have produced results of which we may approve or disapprove, but which we cannot discuss now—but, at all events, it is a Statement which shows a full and fresh consideration of the needs of the country with regard to naval defence pure and simple taken by itself. But the Statement issued by the Secretary for War is not like that Statement: it is a Statement rather in the old groove, I regret to say, and a Statement which is generally marked by that optimist view

as to the defensive position of the country which is held and defended with great ability by my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War. When I speak of the Statement as being optimistic, I wish to repeat what I said on the War Estimates last year as to my right hon. Friend's immense popularity in this House based upon his ability; but however much we may admire him we must recognise in him a very strong supporter of the existing system of War Office administration. [Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN dissented.] We have to judge him by results. We cannot base any statements upon private conversations or opinions; we have to judge him by his policy. His policy is essentially on the old lines, with a small and gradual improvement made from year to year, no doubt, but essentially on the old lines. To illustrate what I have to say—and it is the only illustration I will give—the only statement which I will allow myself to make in detail concerns what is, after all, the main paragraph in the Statement, the one which to the public will convey the impression that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. It is in the first paragraph of the Report which was printed which will strike the public eye. After a formal paragraph which appears each year, comparing the numbers of the Army with the numbers last year, and giving the reasons for any change, the next relates to recruiting, and that paragraph appears to state that nothing could be more satisfactory than the present condition of recruiting. I give that as an illustration—that the statement is an optimistic statement, because this paragraph, when carefully read, contains the words “for a time.” It states that the establishments were so full on January 1st, 1893, that it was found possible for a time to dispense with special enlistments. But, as a matter of fact, no later than the Spring of 1893 special enlistments had to be resorted to again, because the Recruiting Returns had fallen off considerably. I wish to avoid details, because we have discussed them a good deal on former occasions, and not much good has come of it. It seems to me that there is more likelihood of effecting a real change of the military and naval conditions of the country by looking at the large principles which lie at the root of the systems. The

Secretary for War shook his head when I said that he is optimistic; but certainly I gathered last year in his speech upon the Estimates, and I gather from the Statement which he has placed before the House, that he is generally satisfied with the present condition of the Army. But there are few persons who have been connected with the Army, not as Secretary of State, who are satisfied with its general condition. I quoted last year pretty fully the opinion publicly expressed by one of the most distinguished Generals, who, perhaps, more than any other man, has the public ear on such questions—I mean Lord Wolseley. I quoted fully his statements made at a time when he was largely responsible for the administration of the Army, and I am not aware that any changes have been made since that date which have affected the essential truth of those opinions. Lord Wolseley represents the War Office, and, to a certain extent, the administration at home. But what is the view of the other great branch of the Service connected with the Indian Army? Can it be said that those who have practically handled that branch of our Army, of which we are most proud, are supporters of the present state of things? It is a well-known fact that those who have advised the Government of India for many years past on military affairs hold the strongest views against the existing administration of the Army, and I think that no one who knows the facts will contradict the statement which I will make, in as summarised a form as possible, of what their views are with regard to that administration. Those views are—that the last state of the Home Army is worse than the first, and that no public company or private firm can afford to conduct its business on such a basis. When we consider that there is an expenditure on defence of the British Empire of £53,000,000 sterling a year in the cheapest years, and £58,000,000 in the dearest years, and that this year we are increasing our expenditure by more than £3,000,000 sterling on one branch of our defence it is impossible to say that the defects alleged by those high authorities result from the machine being run too cheaply. Those who have advised the Indian Government for some years past believe there is still enormous work to be done before we can convert

this army at home into a "serviceable and homogeneous fighting organism."

"A Railway Board makes it its business to select as General Manager of the line a man who not only commands respect and can enforce obedience, but is an expert in the various branches of railway administration which it is his duty to supervise; and similarly the responsible professional adviser of the Secretary of State for War, whether he be called Commander-in-Chief, Chief of the Staff, or by any other title, should be a man,"

to quote Lord Randolph Churchill's words,

"of military training, military experience, and military eminence."

LORD R. CHURCHILL: When did I use those words?

SIR C. W. DILKE: In the special Memorandum attached to the Report of the Hartington Commission. Those words may be adopted by myself as regards the last part of my Resolution. The noble Lord showed by his also somewhat optimistic speech last year that he, since he has been relieved of the cares of Office, has to some extent modified his views; but I prefer to go to the views he held when he was in some degree responsible for the administration of the Army. Besides these opinions we have the tremendous indictment brought by the Hartington Commission, which was an absolute condemnation of the existing military system. As there were upon that Commission three gentlemen who had filled the Office of Secretary of State for War, one General from the War Office, one Admiral, with scarcely any outside opinion, we must ask whether since the date of that Report there has been any change in the system which can in any way modify the conclusions at which the Commission arrived? I do not know of any which can be held to remove in any degree the anxiety aroused in the public mind by the statements to which I have referred. Some years ago the military system was supposed on paper to give the country eight Army Corps. Then the estimate was reduced to five Army Corps, then two, and then one, and eventually, when more closely examined, it has dropped to a single division of 20,000 men for foreign service. We are largely increasing this year our expenditure on the Navy. With regard to the Navy, we know the results we obtain for our expenditure; we find them in a tangible form. We know by the improvements

which have been made in the last few years in our system of mobilisation, that although there may be defects and drawbacks as regards the construction and manning of our fleets, we get value for our money, whereas as regards the Army we do not get it. In India, we get a good but a small Army—for which India pay a very full, and, as she thinks, an excessive rate—and at home we get an altogether intangible force, arrived at on paper by adding together items, which is not homogeneous in its character, and not in any sense an Army comparable with the Armies of the smallest Foreign Powers in organisation, with a view to war. There has not been any improvement since the crushing Report of Lord Hartington's Commission. There has, of course, been an automatic increase in our Reserves—and that is the one good fact about our present system—so that there are, roughly speaking, 80,000 men available; but this Reserve differs from the Reserve of any other country in the world in times of peace, because although some steps have latterly been taken to see that the men really exist, and that they are occasionally practised in the handling of arms, the Reserve is not called out, as are the Reserves of every other Power in the world, and incorporated with the Forces, and made to take part in manœuvres. Therefore, in the modern sense, it is not a true Reserve, although it is, no doubt, a very useful force. We know that the number of our guns is still extremely low as compared with what other countries get for their money; and our field artillery and cavalry are less adequately supplied with horses than are other Powers, and we still avoid manœuvres on a large scale, as practised by other Powers, simply on account of the cost. We are called upon to-night to pass the Vote for Men and the Vote for Pay. The Vote for the number of men and the first Vote for the Navy that will be taken on Monday are really the foundation of the whole system of our defence. The responsibility that falls upon the House of Commons in voting these two items, the number of men for the Army and Navy, is a very heavy one, which they share with the Cabinet who present the Estimates to the House. It is a responsibility which ought to imply an amount of care and consideration by the Govern-

ment who submit the joint Estimates which there is much reason to believe they do not receive. I wish to know whether the Government present these Estimates as representing the least but still what is sufficient for the needs of the country for the next 12 months, not only for the protection of the home country and the Empire, but for the protection of our trade in all parts of the world? That is what these two items ought to mean. Do they mean this? Is it the case that, so far as human foresight can provide, the Government have thought out afresh, as is their duty, the naval and the military needs of the country? They have had some pressure put upon them in this House—perhaps they would have done it without that pressure, and I do not want to raise controversy with regard to that—but they have been brought to a careful and full consideration of the naval needs of the country. Have they entered into any similar consideration with regard to the military needs of the country? Have they entered into any joint consideration of the Army and Navy as to the share of expenditure which ought to be devoted to the two Services? That is what I doubt. There can be no doubt, I think, that these considerations involve something more than the mere thought by the Secretary for War of what should be the Estimates for the particular Service. That is not enough. I want to know whether the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to tell us, not for himself but for his colleagues and the Cabinet as a whole, whether they have thought out these questions? Is he prepared to say that the number of men and the particular sums of money asked for in the Army Estimates are both sufficient and the best possible? The question that lies behind is whether the Cabinet are satisfied that in the Army as well as in the Navy we get full value for the money we spend, that there is no waste that is preventable, and that we are furnished for our enormous expenditure with something like a model Army, and an Army fit for war? It must be remembered that we have been too much in the habit of regarding Army Estimates as a sort of luxury, as something which provide us for a large expenditure with a toy instead of a machine for war. But unless it is something more

than a machine for those little wars where a few thousand men are required, and unless it is sufficient for the needs of modern war, certainly we ought not to go on year after year discussing these Estimates without inquiry. It may be the case—I do not wish to raise the ire of any military Member of this House—it may be the case that, with the exception of that portion of our Army which meets our needs for India, either actual or prospective, it would be cheaper and better for this country to spend vastly more than we do upon the Navy and less upon the Army. What I want to know, and what the Cabinet in framing their Estimates ought to know, is this: are the proposals before the House those which alone are capable of securing the safety of the country and of the Empire? There is some evidence, I think, that the customary mode of proposing to the House two separate sets of Estimates which have nothing whatever to do with one another, with the Secretary of State for War sitting on that Bench and proposing one set one day, and the Secretary to the Admiralty coming down and proposing, on the authority of the First Lord of the Admiralty, another set on another day—there is some reason to suppose that that long customary plan is not a plan which would be likely to give you that joint and general consideration of our defensive condition which we really want. Who controls these two gentlemen and allocates between them the expenditure of the year? The House of Commons, no doubt.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: The Chancellor of the Exchequer.

SIR C. W. DILKE: The noble Lord has been Chancellor of the Exchequer himself; but we cannot go—it is impossible for us to go, because of the obligation of the Privy Council oaths—into the question of what happens in the Cabinet when the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War come with their Estimates. As I have said, the noble Lord has been Chancellor of the Exchequer. I was going to ask him whether he thought the circumstances of the consideration of the Estimates in the year in which he resigned and the reasons which led to his resignation—whether he thinks that is a satisfactory manner of transacting the joint considera-

tion of the Army and Navy needs of the country, which he seems to tell us is secured by the existing system? I will not trouble the noble Lord, however, for a reply. I prefer to take the Leader of the Party opposite as stating the views of the Party, and he has, to the full, confirmed the doubts which I, for one, very heavily entertained before as to the present system of administration as between the two Departments. The Leader of the Opposition thinks the present system is not satisfactory; it does not give us that which we certainly ought to receive—the full and joint consideration of these double means of our defence, a proper allocation of money as between these two Services and proper control. The control of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a Treasury control, a control in which, if he does his duty as guardian of the public purse, his first consideration is for economy, and that control from time to time, if he is dealing—as he is not in the present case—with a weak man, would enable him to secure economy at the expense of efficiency in the long run. The mere control of the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot be a satisfactory control as regards the efficiency of the Services. And, again, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not military and naval, still less jointly military and naval, experts behind him to tell him what particular items are necessary for the Public Service. If he objects to the Estimate for coaling stations, say, it is on the *ipse dixit* of a particular civilian, and not one who has got responsible authority behind him to advise him on the subject. The Leader of the Opposition has fully confirmed the doubts which existed in my mind, and confirmed the statements of the Hartington Commission, so often quoted by the Member for West Belfast, who has done such good service in calling attention to these matters. We come to the consideration of what is the remedy, because, of course, year after year we have had grumbling in this House—not perhaps on previous occasions at the whole defensive position of the country, but at first one Service, and then the other, for not doing this or that, or for not giving us value for our money. We, of course, have to face the public with the fact that the British Empire spends a great deal more on defensive Services than any

Empire in the world. We are spending from £53,000,000 to £58,000,000 sterling a year on these Services. It is chiefly in this country and India that we are spending these fabulous sums, and the inhabitants generally are beginning to doubt whether a business management for the whole of the defensive Services of the Empire, with one plan, one scheme, one responsibility, would not give them better value for their money than they get at the present time. What is the remedy? The remedy suggested by the Hartington Commission for the particular question was, I fear, rather a feeble one. They recommended a certain amount of intercommunication between the Services, but General Sir Henry Brackenbury—who is now in India—objected to the particular measure, as he thought it altogether inadequate. He was the military Member of that Commission, and the Admiral who was on the Commission also objected to the particular measure proposed. Very little has been done upon these lines. A sort of Joint Committee exists; but I think it is clear from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and from little revelations in the semi-official handbook to the British Army recently published, that that Committee does not deal with what may be called Cabinet responsibility, that joint responsibility for the Services for Imperial defence. Here I am speaking what is mere gossip; it may be idle rumour. These matters are somewhat secret, but there is no doubt that the late Government for a time established a Defence Committee of the Cabinet. I believe that that Defence Committee had not permanent direct advisers, or records for its successors who were to come after it. Of course, a mere Committee from time to time of the Cabinet may be a useful thing; but, unless you give it more formal consecration by the official system of the country, it cannot be vouched to this House with any great weight or authority, and it requires a more firm place in our defence and economic system than it has occupied up to the present to be of real use. At the present moment it has not had any serious effect. It may have done something with regard to naval matters, but as regards the work of the administration or the particular form of the Army Estimates, or the proposals made to us

for the Military Service, I do not think that Committee has had any effect. Indeed, the extraordinary similarity of the Army Estimates from year to year shows that there has not been any serious or fresh consideration of military questions. Now, Sir, what we all want is the same thing—namely, real responsibility of the Cabinet. Those who are nominally responsible we want to make really responsible for the advice—say to-night or on Monday—they give to the House. We do not want to feel we are merely acting on the advice of right hon. Gentlemen on that Bench, but on the responsible opinion of the Cabinet as a whole. The Cabinet must obtain the best advice possible. I, for my part, should prefer that the advice should be concentrated for each Service, because I think it is far more responsible advice if it comes mainly on the responsibility of a single man as regards the Army and Navy respectively than if you dispersed it among a great number of people, because if you disperse the responsibility it is not real. What you want to get is some person who is really responsible for the time being to his chief. As far as I am concerned, form in this matter is immaterial. There have been times when perhaps there might have been at the head of affairs those who had a very strong constitutional inability to face the very painful facts connected with the modern situation as regards dangers to this country, which have made it undesirable either that the whole Cabinet or the Prime Minister in particular should have this responsibility specially laid upon him. I, for my part, wish to disavow, on behalf of those who give attention to these matters, and think it our duty to do so, anything like, by thinking of war, being suspected of being less anxious for peace, or less afraid of the consequences of war, or more willing to incur them than other people. There is no member of the Peace Society in this House who has a more earnest desire for peace than I have. I have seen something of war, and those who have seen war, I am sure, would be the last who would desire to promote a warlike policy. But it seems to me the first duty of the House of Commons to lay this responsibility upon the political personages; and whoever may be those charged with the Government of this country, they are the

proper persons to be responsible to this House for the advice they give. There is, at the present moment, an exhibition taking place in London, in which a young Scotchman, who is almost worthy to be ranked with Rembrandt, has portrayed the horrors of war in a way that is accepted by us all. A horrible and squalid but pompous spectre is represented stalking across the picture, beating with one hand a great drum, whilst with a flaming torch in the other he is setting fire to the dwellings of the people. We all hate war, and there is no man who hates it more than I do. But to hate it ought not to drive us to refuse to consider it. The whole of this enormous expenditure of ours, by far the largest single branch of our expenditure, is worthless and useless expenditure altogether unless it is an absolutely reliable insurance against the dangers of war; and I do not think any man who watches the foreign policy of this country, however prudently conducted, can doubt that many of these dangers have increased and gathered in a kind of network which has been drawn tighter during the last few years than for a great many years before. I know some people in this House are under the impression that I am absolutely connected with one particular form of remedy which has been associated with my name in the public Press, and I wish to say that form in this matter is immaterial. I have stated what I want to secure, and I will put two or three different ways of securing it which very often would come to the same thing. What I ventured to suggest at first was that the Prime Minister should be brought to take more personal concern in the defence of the country than is the case at the present time; that he should consider himself mainly responsible for the joint consideration of the whole defence proposals; that he should hear the Secretary for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and their advisers if he is doubtful, and that they together, more seriously than has been the case in the past, should go into the difficulties of the problem, and he should then advise with them as to the Estimates. It was pointed out to me that sometimes there might be a Prime Minister who would have a special dislike to the question, and any such meeting might become a form, and mean

nothing more than the present consideration of the Cabinet. There are some Members of this House who think because of recent events that I must entirely differ from the present Prime Minister. There are questions on which I do not agree with him, such as those about Egypt and the annexation of Uganda, but I am certain that our present Prime Minister can be trusted with this responsibility, and if he would take it upon himself, and let the country know that he, from time to time, would thoroughly go into this question with those primarily responsible to this House, the House would have confidence that a great deal has been gained for the joint consideration of this military and naval expenditure. But something more is needed, and there was another suggestion made—that a Defence Minister, a Minister who should represent the Army and Navy, should be the person charged specially with the responsibility to this House. That suggestion was made many years ago. It is the practice of all the Australian Colonies who, although they have the management of defences on a much smaller scale, nevertheless admirably manage that particular defence with which they are charged. It will be the plan adopted under the Federal Constitution of Australasia for the defence of Australasia. That plan has been suggested for us. It was proposed to the Hartington Commission by the Member for South Paddington, and the Commission voted against it. I do not think the reasons for deciding against it are satisfactory or conclusive reasons.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I did not recommend that.

*SIR C. W. DILKE: I thought the noble Lord did. At all events, the proposal was discussed by the Hartington Commission, and rejected by that Commission for reasons which were inadequate. The reason given against it, that such Minister would be overwhelmed with detail, is not, I think, a good or sufficient reason. He would undoubtedly be overwhelmed with detail if he tried to do what too many Ministers do at the present time; if he tried to answer every question or letter of every Member affecting the particular Department over which he presided. If he did the enormous amount of detail work which both the present First Lord of the Admiralty and

the Secretary of State for War do, no doubt he would be overwhelmed with work, and just as these two find it difficult to get through their work in the day, so he would find it difficult to get through his in the day, and would have to give the night as well. I am quite ashamed of myself when I have, on behalf of a constituent who is, say, a Yeomanry sergeant or something of the kind, to put some purely personal and private matter to find the great machinery of the Secretary of State for War has to be brought into play to give an answer in that matter. We should all prefer to have them set free to attend to the larger problem, and that some clerk should deal with this trifling matter for us. I do believe that in every Department of the State Ministers do a large amount of unnecessary work—unnecessary in the sense that other people could do it just as well—and the main work of that Department could be discharged by them without the enormous call upon their time and labour which is made at present. I doubt, therefore, whether the answer given by the Hartington Commission was altogether a sound one as to being overwhelmed with detail. I do not think it necessary he should be. I believe it should be possible that a Minister of Defence might, in connection with great experts and the permanent heads of the two Departments, having those under him who would discharge all the House of Commons and the House of Lords' work as regards detail—could discharge his duties efficiently and preside over both in chief. But I am not wedded to a particular form. Whether the Prime Minister specially undertakes the duty, whether it is undertaken by a Defence Minister, or whether the suggestion is adopted which, I believe, is that of the Leader of the Opposition, that a Defence Committee of the Cabinet, which I have heard was instituted by the late Government, should be provided with a more avowed and distinct position, armed with permanent responsible advisers, and equipped with records so as to hand over its work to those by whom they might be succeeded in Office—all these plans would come at the present moment to very much the same thing. I am certain the noble Lord at the head of the Government would personally charge himself with a

great deal of this duty, so that all the plans would produce the same result. They would give us what we have not at the present time—that joint consideration of the defences of the Empire which the necessities and needs of the Empire demand, and which is also forced upon this House, it seems to me, by the great amount of money we at present spend. I will not trouble the House any longer. I believe at this moment the House feels, with the Army especially, that on the whole question of defence there is an absence of responsibility to this House. Take the most challenged act connected with either Service of the last 10 years—the case of the reduction of the Horse Artillery by the late Mr. Stanhope. In that case I will ask anyone who remembers it, and what was said against it and for it, how it was pointed out how short we were already in artillery, and what reasons there were for believing this country ought to be specially equipped with artillery as a means of war. All those who remember that controversy must be aware that it was impossible to get at a very real responsibility upon that occasion, because we could not imagine that the Secretary of State himself, as an individual, apart from advice, would wish us to take his mere *ipse dixit* for the change. On the other hand, we were never able really to ascertain who had been the suggester of that change, and who would really make himself responsible for the result. There is in this country a very special danger with regard to our whole military and naval operations, and one which ought to be borne specially in mind when considering this great subject. We are a defensive country—a country which stands on the defensive. We are not a warlike country in the sense in which many other Powers are warlike, which are continually considering whether it may not be more to their advantage to attack and begin the war by an attack on another. That, from time to time, has been the position in the last 30 years of a great number of countries in Europe, each of which has been led by the necessities of their position to consider this question. We are essentially a defensive country from the point of view of a great war, and it would never enter the mind of anyone that we should take the first step in war. We stand purely

on the defensive. We have got a great deal and, like rich people, we want to keep it. But by the very necessities of our military position we are too much inclined to consider what may be called strategic defence as against a policy of mere defence. Our policy is a policy of mere defence, but in strategy—if we were to go to war against our will—we should have to follow the ordinary rules of war. We should have to find our enemy, attack him and reduce him in the ordinary way of war. Obviously with our Army and our small numbers that can hardly be expected to be a land attack. It must be expected to be a naval attack, and it will be by naval means we shall in all probability have to reduce our enemies in future war. There is this great danger. If you look on this defensive position as implying defensive strategy you fall into the danger pointed out by all great writers, you look upon your force merely as a shield, and so regarding the matter you must prepare yourself for defeat, for unless you are prepared to use it as a weapon to parry and repulse, you cannot carry out even a defensive policy. That is a special danger in our case. It points, of course, to the predominance of the Navy in our defence, and as one who tried some years ago, when I first began to consider this matter, to work on this question of the Army by itself as detached from the Navy, I very soon found I was on a wrong line. The naval school point to the necessary predominance of naval considerations and to the Navy being the attacking force. I do not wish in any way to interpose these views upon others who may support me. My main point is that I think I have established a sufficient ground for anxiety and sufficient call for remedy to make it worth the while of the House to give some time to the consideration of those particular remedies which I have ventured to point out.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER, who rose to second the Resolution, expressed his satisfaction that this important subject had been brought forward during the tenure of Office of the present Secretary for War, who was an official as open in his mind as regarded military problems and fair dealings with the Army as any who had preceded him in his Office, and even if they were not likely to convince him they could feel that they were not

talking in vain, as they were appealing to a Minister who showed he took a keen and lively interest in the very important work of his Department. He (Mr. Arnold-Forster) had always found the greatest difficulty to be contended with was this. People would say, the moment this question was raised, "It cannot be as bad as you say, because in the past, somehow or other, we have always succeeded." That was not his reading of the past history of our military and naval forces. There had been many defeats and many operations of war which, though not defeats, had been failures from the point of view from which they were undertaken; there had been constant throwing out of plans and failure and dislocation due, and solely due, to the want of disorganisation in the great Department at home. As an instance of this he looked back to the Peninsular War, to the Crimean War—where £50,000,000 sterling were spent in repairing the errors of the Department—and to many of those expeditions mentioned by his right hon. Friend. He looked back to the Egyptian Campaign and the Afghan Campaign, and in all these wars there had been an enormous unnecessary waste of blood and treasure, in consequence not of a lack of courage on the part of the troops in the field, but of want of organisation in the Departments at home. He had never urged—as some people had suggested—that when British sailors and soldiers found themselves side by side they would not, owing to jealousy between the forces, make every effort to do what they were set to do—namely, to uphold the honour of our country and obtain the success of the war. But he pointed to defects existing, not as between the men in the field, but in the offices by which our armies were placed in the field and our navies on the ocean. Could any one for a moment contend that our military and naval expenditure was based on any reasonable calculation? The greatest maritime Power in the world spent £17,000,000 on its Navy and £40,000,000 on its Army. Could that expenditure be based on any reasonable and logical calculation of the different duties which those two Forces had to discharge, and their relative positions in maintaining the defence of the Empire? The fact was

that the tradition of the times of the great Continental wars had been continued down to the present day. But he knew that the present Secretary for War had expressed the view that the time had gone by when this country could hope to engage with success in the great military struggle of the Continent; and he hoped that the possibility of this country taking part in such wars in the future had been utterly discarded. He contended that it was impossible that this comparison of expenditure between the Army and Navy could be referable to any rule of logic and reason. Every item of naval defence was far more costly than the corresponding item for the Army. There was no item in the Army expenditure at all comparable with the cost of the *matériel* of a great battleship. Yet the country was spending three times as much on its Army as on its Navy, and it had spent four times as much. He was glad to believe that it was no longer the case that the Navy might not be mentioned when the Army was under discussion in the House. But he remembered the time when such a ruling was given; and that was a clear illustration of the attitude which had been preserved with respect to the relation of the two Services. It might be said that something had already been done, and that there was no occasion for alarm. He challenged that statement point blank. The Navy and the Army existed for one purpose only—to conduct successful war; and if they were not capable of fulfilling that purpose they might as well be abolished to-morrow. There was on record the deliberate judgment of the officials of the Army and the Navy, and of the leaders of opinion in the House, that by neither the Army nor the Navy at the present time was that object achieved. It might be thought that the Army was prepared to conduct those small expeditions which had to be undertaken from year to year. Had all those great officers of State who were employed for the purpose devoted their attention to that object? No; they had not. There was the statement made by one of the most responsible and justly-respected members of the War Office Administration, Mr. Knox, on the very question as to whether there was any provision made for providing battalions to take part in any expedi-

tionary force or a small war. Mr. Knox said—

"The provision of expeditionary battalions to be sent abroad in case of a small war was a point which certainly was not worked out by Lord Cardwell's Committee, and no plan that I know of has been worked out by any Committee, or by the War Office with a view to meet that emergency."

Therefore, for 20 years there had been no attempt to perform one of the most elementary duties of the Admiralty and the War Office. Was the country better prepared for a war on a large scale? He asserted that it was the deliberate judgment of one of the strongest Commissions which ever sat on the subject—Lord Hartington's Commission—that no attempt had been made to establish settled and regular communication between the Services, and that no combined plan for the defence of the Empire in any given emergency had ever been worked out. It was typical of the present way of looking at things that the Royal Marines—a force unrivalled in the world—were neglected both by the Admiralty and the War Office. They were deprived of their just number of officers and of promotion; they were disappointed in many ways which were keenly felt by officers and men; and they were not represented as they ought to be either at the Admiralty or the War Office. Yet the Royal Marines was the nucleus of the very force which a great maritime Empire which had its pathways on the ocean needed to do its work. It would be impertinent for him to suggest any remedies. But there were two or three remedies which had something to recommend them; and any one could see that the present order of things did not, and could not, afford an avenue of escape from the difficulties under which we labour. What was wanted, in the first place, was some arrangement by which a proper organisation for war might be set on foot. In the second place, there ought to be means by which the country could be informed if such an organisation did not exist. Time after time, a condition of affairs in naval and military matters had been disclosed such as the country would not have allowed to continue for six weeks if it had known of it. Time after time, naval scares, promoted from outside, had pointed to the necessity for

additional expenditure on the Navy. Lord Northbrook objected to the plan of making a single officer responsible to the House of Commons, but Lord Northbrook was the last person to speak in defence of the existing system. He could remember the time when Lord Northbrook stated in public and private that no expenditure on the Navy was necessary, and that if £2,000,000 were given to the Navy he should not know what to do with it. He remembered also that 10 months later Lord Northbrook had asked for £11,000,000 for the Navy to enable it to go to sea. There had been in the meantime a popular agitation about the Navy which forced the administrators of naval affairs to take this action. The scale of preparation for war was more adequate in the Navy than in the Army. Nevertheless, at the time of the Russian scare an order was actually sent to a distinguished naval officer to report on the best means available for the defence of our coasts and the protection of the shipping in the Channel. This plan, which ought to have been prepared months before, was written by the officer on the spot; and the Report still existed. This, too, was in view of war with what was then a fourth-rate naval Power. There was practically a consensus of opinion among naval and military officers that some definite responsibility must be attached to some individual with regard to the defence of the Empire. The recommendation was made in the Report of Lord Hartington's Commission that such a person should be appointed, and appointed for a sufficiently long term of years to enable him to learn his work. This was not a novel proposal. It was carried into practice in nearly every country which had to conduct its defence on a large scale. It existed in Germany, Russia, Italy, and France—the same result was aimed at by the constitution of the "État Major." Parliament was told certain facts sometimes on the responsibility of Ministers, but what was stated did not represent all the facts; and what was wanted was that Parliament should know something in addition to the modified and political view of defence questions which came through Ministers, as, for example, what the naval and military officers who had to fight in case of war thought of the subject, and what were the military

and naval needs of a given situation. He was in favour of the proposal of the right hon. Baronet that Parliament should make it an absolute *sine qua non* that some permanent responsible adviser should be established whose position should be authoritative as far as stating what were the naval and military needs. Great and most vital as was the question which had been raised last year in connection with Ireland, he was bound to say that, in his opinion, the matter which they were now discussing was of even more transcendent importance. He believed that they were doing their best to incur such a disaster by land and sea as would strain all the tremendous powers of recuperation even of this great country. It would not be unworthy the attention of the House if hon. Members gave their impartial judgment, sympathy, and interest to make it possible that Parliament should no longer continue to pursue the policy of appointing Commissions. They had got beyond the stage of Commissions, for every known fact bearing on the matter had been accumulated. They needed some strong man who would move in the matter; and he believed the Secretary for War was able and desirous to take that initiative in this movement if properly supported by hon. Members, which if taken might lead the country out of this Slough of Despond in which it now was. He begged to second the Motion.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"This House, before voting supplies for the maintenance of Military establishments in the United Kingdom, seeks an assurance from Her Majesty's Government that the Estimates for that purpose submitted to it are framed upon consideration of the needs of possible war by sea and land, and upon a consideration of advice tendered in that behalf by such Officer of each Service as is fitted to command in war Her Majesty's forces of that Service,"—(*Sir C. W. Dilke*.)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I shall not follow the hon. Gentleman who spoke last into the wide area of naval and military service which he has traversed in the course of his speech,

and by doing which he has rather led the House away from the most interesting and, in some respects, most advantageous argument which the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean adduced in his very comprehensive speech. But the fact of the matter is that I do not think the right hon. Baronet quite grasped the relations of Parliament to the Government or the relations of the Government to Parliament. There is no real responsibility—no practical responsibility—on the part of the Minister or Secretary of State to the House; and, unless we go back many years, there is no record of a Vote of Censure upon that Minister, which would involve, of course, the fall of the Administration. No Vote for the Army or Navy has ever been negatived that I can remember, and voting against the Estimates in any force is hardly known. Everything asked for has always been granted. I want to know, therefore, how we can get any Parliamentary control if it is the regular practice of Parliament to vote the sums demanded without making any effort to ascertain the information on which the Minister made his Statement. We have never been able to do that, and never shall be able, so long as the civil management of the Services continues. So long as Ministerial responsibility and naval and military responsibility are not directly connected, and the Services are not able to make their opinion officially known, not only to the Minister of the day, but to the Government of the day, the House of Commons will never have sufficient knowledge to enable it to decide whether the Government is right or wrong in its changes or in the supplies for which it asks. That has always been my belief, and I have heard much of these matters, notably on the Hartington Commission. Members know little of that Commission, because they have not seen the evidence, which was given on condition that it should not be published, and to read the Report without knowing the evidence is to be hampered in arriving at a decision. The right hon. Baronet dealt largely with certain operations of the Army, and he rather criticised the military system in India. I can say on authority which I cannot now name that the British troops in India have never been more efficient or more fit for service on the frontier.

*SIR C. W. DILKE: What I said was that the Army in India, though small, is admirable, but that the Indian Government are not satisfied with the system of administration, including the system of despatch of troops, its cost and efficiency.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: The Indian Government have always been anxious to place British troops on a stronger numerical footing, but I know of no dissatisfaction on the part of the Indian Government with the system of sending out regiments to India. The troops go out with great regularity to India; they soon settle down to the climate, and soon become efficient. Certainly this was the case under the late Commander-in-Chief, and I believe that the present Commander-in-Chief is quite equal to keeping the troops in India in the same state of efficiency. The maxim *Si vis pacem para bellum* does not command approval if it means that in times of profound peace, when it is difficult to discern from what quarter war may come, the country is to get into a panic, to change its existing system without due deliberation, and to spend large sums of money without sufficient thought. I quite agree with the right hon. Baronet that the question whether our present system for the management of the Army and of the Navy ought to be altered deserves the serious consideration of any Administration. I think the object of any Administration should be to find out the best method in which to associate more closely the professional or the military element with the responsibility of the civil element, and until that is done there can be no responsibility with regard to the administration of the War Department towards the House of Commons. I do not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer is at all a useful influence in controlling the Estimates of the War Department, for there is no joint communication on his part with the Services as to their needs. At any rate, I have never heard of any organised scheme of joint communication, although the adoption of such a scheme has been recommended by a very influential Commission. One great deficiency in the existing system is that Cabinets never get military or naval advice directly. I think that is the greatest fault in our system. They receive it

through the Minister for War and through the First Lord of the Admiralty, and it is quite possible that those Ministers may have opinions of their own opposed to those of their advisers. That was the case with Lord Northbrook. The Cabinet never know the naval position until there is a great outcry. Professional opinion never reaches the Cabinet at all. This is why I think a Committee of the Cabinet would be rather dangerous; for it would interpose a further obstacle between the Cabinet and the experts. The plan providing for control over the Services by a Committee of the Cabinet does not appear to me to be satisfactory except in some special cases. Nor do I think that the Prime Minister is the proper man to have practical superintendence over the Services and their management. The Prime Minister ought to form his judgment, as he does now, on the Report of the Ministers responsible, but to bring him into close and constant communication with the War Office and the Admiralty would interfere with the ordinary duties of the Head of the Government, and prevent him from obtaining the acquaintance he ought to have with the views of the other Departments. I do not agree with the idea of a Civil Minister looking after two Departments. The right hon. Baronet charged me with having been in favour of a Civil Minister to do this. I never was. It would be impossible to have a Civil Minister to superintend the Admiralty and the War Office; it is not in the power of man to discharge such a work. What I propose, and what the more I think of it the more I favour is the appointment of a Finance Minister, who might be called Treasurer of the Army and Navy, who would hold a high position, and be in constant communication with the Heads of the two Departments, so bringing them into closer connection than is the case at present. This official, for weeks before the Estimates are prepared, would find out what each Service required, would balance the respective claims, and would present to the Cabinet not only the civil, but the military and naval opinions brought before him. There would thus be useful inter-communication between the Cabinet and the professional element. Of course, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would always have his voice in what the

expenditure should be, but such a Treasurer as I suggest would certainly have great authority with the Cabinet, before whom he would place what long and careful investigations would show to be the military and naval wants of the country. As a rule, the practice of Governments is to make the Estimates of one year very much like the Estimates of the year before, and Cabinets as a rule, I think, do not give much consideration to the Army and Navy. They take it for granted that what the respective Ministers say is right, and they will never be able to get real information until naval and military responsibility is represented by such an officer as I have suggested. Until this is done we shall go on spending much about the same sums year by year, and there will be the same annual complaints that the Services are not sufficiently provided for. I much wish the Government would appoint a small Commission—there is plenty of information ready to hand—to examine into the schemes suggested and draw up a plan. Then it would be possible to make some real progress.

SIR G. CHESNEY (Oxford) said, the question they as Representatives of the people, of the country, and the guardians of the Public Purse had to ask themselves was whether the money granted under these Votes was properly represented by the results they got. That really was very closely connected with the Motion of the right hon. Baronet. It had been said by both previous speakers, and truly said, that the whole *raison d'être* and object of their military and naval expenditure was for the purpose of war. If that expenditure did not place the Army and Navy in a position adapted to the exigencies of war then, obviously, they had no cause to have either a considerable Army or a powerful Navy, and the point he would submit was this—Did the House and the country get full value for their money, looking at the two Services as means for the purposes of war? He would say at the outset that he had himself the greatest personal detestation of war. He did not speak as a Jingo. He had seen too much of war not to know that there were innumerable blunders committed in it; that a great deal depended upon chance, and that very often the exertions of gallant troops and good naval officers were frus-

trated either by the incompetence of Generals or by mal-administration at home. No reasonable man could allege that these things could always be avoided. They spent upon the Army about £17,500,000 a year, apart from the expenditure on the Army in India. The House voted that sum. How much of it could it be said was available for purposes of war? The only establishments which we kept up which could be considered for purposes of war, either offensive or defensive, apart from the questions of garrisons and the Colonies, and of undertaking petty expeditions and obligations which the necessities of the Empire imposed, were the Militia, the Yeomanry, the Volunteers, and the Reserves. These Services together cost about £2,250,000 out of the £17,500,000 total net expenditure. They, therefore, had an expenditure of £15,250,000 representing the normal peace outlay of the country. No doubt if this expenditure furnished them with a machine which on an emergency arising was ready to pass from a state of peace to a state of war it might be said, and very fairly said, that it was perfectly justified by the objects in view. But our Army, he regretted to say, was a peace Army, and nothing more than a peace Army. It would require to be entirely reorganised and reconstituted to make it an Army efficient for the purposes of war. That was an important point for consideration. It might be said that they had a powerful Reserve. He was glad to know that the Reserves had now been brought up to 85,000 men. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the War Office on that satisfactory result; but he wished to draw attention to the fact that that Reserve of 85,000 men was far from being a Reserve for war purposes. All they could do with it would be, not to bring the Army up to a condition at which it would be fit to make war, but simply to furnish a nucleus upon which they might proceed to build up a military war system. He would explain how he arrived at that conclusion. The House was no doubt aware that our regiments were on a very attenuated scale. Our Cavalry regiments, if they were wanted for active service—as all military men acquainted with the subject would tell them—would not, after making the necessary deductions that it would be

necessary to make from the nominal strength in order to arrive at what would be the strength in the field, would not amount to more than 250 or 300 sabres per regiment—a mere handful of men. Our Infantry battalions, which were nominally 750 strong after deducting recruits, sick, depôts, and guards, would go into the field 400 strong, or mere skeletons of corps. A proof of that was to be found in the little manœuvres, such as those which took place in Surrey and Hampshire. They showed how weak the regiments were. The Artillery were probably in a better condition; but they, too, were on an attenuated scale. On an outbreak of war 45,000 men of the Reserve would be required at once to bring the regiments up to the proper strength, leaving out of account how they were to keep them supplied so as to make up for the waste of war. That took away 45,000 men of the Reserve. It left 40,000, which would be required on the outbreak of war for service in India. They heard a great deal about the efficient state of the Indian Army. He was happy to think that it was efficient—a most efficient Army so far as it went, but it was an Army entirely on a peace footing. It was an Army without reserves or depôts, and which had been largely reduced during the last 40 years. It had been increased somewhat in regard to British troops, but its whole strength had been greatly reduced during the past 40 years. Meanwhile their Indian territories and responsibilities had increased in every direction. They had now in India territories as big as the United Kingdom and France and Germany, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Sweden; the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a tract a great deal larger than Europe if they deducted Russia. This territory was occupied by a garrison of about 200,000 men; there were hostile tribes on the frontiers, and beyond the frontier on the North-West there was a great possible source of danger. For that country they had, as compared with the enormous forces in Europe with the garrison in England, an Army on a peace scale. If they were called on to send a force to the frontier—and he would not say that that was a liability which it would be political prudery to ignore—the utmost force of British troops we could send

would be 30,000, leaving 40,000 in India, a number altogether too small to hold that country in the state of excitement which would inevitably arise. Even that force could not be sent out unless they were sure of receiving immediate reinforcements from England. Therefore, India and England would at once absorb the whole of the Reserves. He did not desire that they should add one additional soldier to the Army or that they should spend £1 more on it than they spent now. On the contrary, he believed that the Army cost now a great deal more than it ought to cost for the results which one got, and he contended that for a country situated as we were, with all our enormous responsibilities in every part of the world, with all the responsibilities that might come on us at any time, they ought to be provided with a system under which they would be prepared when the occasion arose to pass at once from a state of peace to a state of war. The country and the House ought not to be satisfied with less than that. At present we had no such system nor any assurance that it would be introduced. The Report of the Hartington Commission stated that in the broadest way, yet nothing had been done since the publication of that Report. What was wanted, beyond all doubt, was that there should be somebody responsible to the War Minister for the preparation of a scheme of defence—an officer prepared, by a long and careful study of all engagements, and liable to at once put the Army on a war footing. There was no one of that kind at present at the War Office. There were, no doubt, a number of essays written from time to time by officers more or less irresponsible suggesting operations in the Baltic, in the Black Sea, in the Caucasus, and elsewhere, but nowhere at present had the Secretary for War a properly worked-out scheme which would enable the Government, if, unhappily, the country was drawn into war, to satisfy themselves that they had at their hands the best means of defence in a complete form. It had been said that the creation of responsible officers behind the Government would be to take away from the responsibility of the Government itself. The idea always had been that the Minister for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty should be entirely responsible for

everything down to the smallest detail. He thought that Parliamentary responsibility had often been carried too far. Now, he would put it to the House, how was it possible, especially in these busy days, for anyone, be he ever so experienced, to give his services to that House afternoon and night, and at the same time to carry out matters of detail and careful work involved in applying the military means at the disposal of the Government to the needs of the country? After all, what was the policy of the Government? Parliamentary responsibility simply meant that if things went wrong the Government was turned out. What satisfaction was that to the country, which wanted to know that the supplies they freely granted should be turned to the best account? For that purpose, both in regard to the Navy and the Army, there should be some high authority which should be definitely responsible to the Government. To everybody who took the trouble to ascertain it was well-known that although the nations of Europe were now on friendly terms, they did not keep up and increase their gigantic Armies for the purposes of peace. He recognised with gratitude what had been done by the Secretary of State for War during his short tenure of Office. But there had been a most important change made in the last three years at the War Office under which what small responsibility which was left to individual officers had been taken away. Under the new system the Commander-in-Chief had been made nominally responsible for every detail of military business. No man dare write a letter from the War Office in his own name. He quoted the name of the Secretary for War. He challenged hon. Members to produce any record of the War Office to the contrary. That system of centralisation must ensure absolute failure in case of war, and he was afraid that unless there was a reform before war broke out they would undergo some great catastrophe. He did not say that he believed the British nation would ever go under in any war. He believed that, under any circumstances or trials, we should win through to eventual success; but what he did feel was that they would only achieve that success after a great and needless waste of blood and money, which might have been

saved if in times of peace this country, and those who were responsible to this country for its expenditure and for its business, had devoted some reasonable share of their time to work out and settle in a satisfactory way this grave and most important problem.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I do not mean to detain the House for more than a very few moments. But the reference which the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean made to me in moving the Amendment which is now the subject of our discussion perhaps makes it desirable that I should just explain to the House what my views are upon this important question so far as I have myself ventured to formulate them. I may, however, premise what I have to say by making the admission to the House that the actual method by which our common object is to be carried out appears to me to be surrounded with difficulties, and that I find it much easier to criticise the various schemes that have been propounded than myself to propose one which shall be absolutely free from objections. However, I think I am absolved from arguing the main proposition, which has been so ably laid before us by the various speakers who have preceded me. No one has ventured to get up and say that there is not a grave necessity lying upon us at present for co-ordinating our forces for ensuring harmonious action between the Navy and the Army, and for preparing those plans for military defence—I use the word “military” as including both the Army and the Navy—which every nation in the world prepares in time of peace, and which I rather suspect we have not, at all events, got in any advanced state of preparation. If that general proposition be conceded to me, and if I am absolved from arguing it, I will confine myself to a very brief consideration of some of the plans for meeting the difficulty which have been propounded. First, and perhaps the most apparently plausible of all the schemes, is that of a Minister of Defence—a Member of this House or of the other House—who shall be responsible to Parliament for the general defence of the Empire. My objection to that scheme arises out of this consideration: I cannot quite see what is to be the relation between this Minister of Defence and the Heads of

the Army and Navy. If you thought it desirable or practicable to reduce the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Minister for War to the position of Under Secretaries, then I think the position of a Minister of Defence would be a possible one. But I do not think you can administer your Army or your Navy by men under the rank of Cabinet Ministers. I do not believe the Services themselves would tolerate it, and, though it is true that under our system of Parliamentary questioning and answering, and under the system under which every constituent, however remotely connected with either Service, justly thinks he has the right, through his Representative, of obtaining some reply to his communication direct from the Minister for War—though, I say, under that system the Minister for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty are obliged to consider details which had much better be left to their subordinates—still I think the broad fact remains that you must have at the head of your Army and your Navy men responsible to the House and the country for the conduct of their Departments, and men who shall not be under the rank of Cabinet Ministers. If that is so, what position is your Minister of Defence to have in relation to these two great officers of State? The position appears to me to be impossible. Is he to walk about between the Admiralty and the War Office, consulting now with the one and now with the other? Is he to be responsible for the Navy Estimates and for the Army Estimates, and, if not, how is he to be responsible for the defence of the Empire? By this proposal to set up a third officer of State who is not to be at the head of one Department or the other, you are endeavouring to construct a machine, with the best intentions, that cannot be expected to work satisfactorily. Some objection of the same kind, I think, attaches to the suggestion thrown out by my noble Friend near me, who speaks upon this matter probably with an authority second to none in the House, and who has given very great attention to the question. His proposal, as I understand it, is that a Finance Minister should be appointed who shall be neither the First Lord of the Admiralty nor the Secretary for War nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But it appears to me that, although he is not to

be one of these three officers, he will, as it were, take out of the hands of each of these officers some essential part of his work. How could a Chancellor of the Exchequer propose a Budget to his colleagues when a third of that Budget is settled for him by another colleague in the same Cabinet? Where is this military financier to get his figures from? He must get them from the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Minister for War. Just as I think he will take from the Chancellor of the Exchequer part of the responsibility which attaches to that officer, so he will take away from the Minister for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty part of the responsibility which properly attaches to their offices, because the man who decides on the finance of the Services decides the policy of the Services. If the Finance Minister is really to be responsible for the expenditure of the Army and of the Navy, you may call him a Finance Minister, but he will in reality be the controlling authority both over the Army and the Navy. Then there is a third proposition, or rather there are two other propositions which are separate but which I think should be considered together. There is the suggestion that the Prime Minister should himself undertake the business in conjunction with his colleagues at the Army and the Navy, should make himself acquainted with the general problem that has to be dealt with, and should make himself responsible for the solution of that problem; and then there is the plan which I regard as essentially different—namely, a Committee of the Cabinet. That the Prime Minister should himself take the whole burden on his shoulders must depend upon what else he is called upon to do. I cannot imagine that anybody who is, for example, both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary should, however exceptionally endowed with physical and mental endurance, have also time to go into the details of national defence. With all the amount of work which the Foreign Secretary is called upon to do it is impossible that any single Minister, of ordinary or even exceptional mental and physical powers, should undertake so important a matter. Under these circumstances, I should imagine he would associate with himself a Committee of the Cabinet, of

which he should, when present, be Chairman, and should throw upon shoulders less heavily weighted than his own the responsibility for the advice given to the Cabinet. That is the only possible way which I can see of keeping the Members of the Cabinet in touch with the military and naval experts. Some gentlemen have talked as if it was desirable to leave the solution of these questions to experts. It appears to me impossible. Do what you will, under a system of representative Government and Parliamentary responsibility, the ultimate weight of the decision must be borne by civilian Members of the Cabinet and by the Government. I do not see how you can escape from that. I quite admit the obvious anomalies of a civilian being responsible for the treatment of questions with which he has little familiarity, and making himself master of principles which are commonplaces to a soldier and which he will have laboriously to learn. Grave as the objections are to such a course, I think that, if we are to keep Governmental responsibility, we must make up our minds to submit to them. I do not talk of this House having control over the Estimates or otherwise. I think discussions in this House may be a useful check upon Ministers and Departments, but we are now talking business, and as men of business we know perfectly well we cannot lay down what is or what is not necessary for national defence. We know perfectly well that as a body of men sitting speaking within these walls it is absurd to expect us to utter an opinion worth having in regard to any far-reaching scheme for dealing with the defence of the Empire. All we can do is to express our views and leave them to be carried out by responsible Ministers, giving them the machinery by which the duty which we cast upon their shoulders may be by them adequately fulfilled. How, then, do I think a Committee of the Cabinet is the only method of bringing the Cabinet itself into touch with expert opinion, and, through the Cabinet, giving the House practically the best advice and information they can obtain on these subjects? The answer is this: A Committee of the Cabinet such as I contemplate is not merely one of those passing bodies called into existence to

deal with a particular question and passing out of existence when that particular question is decided. I rather contemplate that the Prime Minister, with or without his colleagues, or a Committee of the Cabinet, with or without the Prime Minister, as the case may be, should constitute themselves a body with permanent records and confidential advisers. That is what we want. The Minister of a Department makes it his business to inform his successor exactly how matters stand in the Department and what questions remain unsettled; and if they are two gentlemen of common sense, they will find it possible, however sharp their political differences on questions connected with the Department, to come to a perfect agreement, so as to preserve that continuity of administration which happily characterises our Government, whatever Party be in power or whatever changes the political wheel of fortune may bring about. If we conceive some organisation of this kind—a Committee of the Cabinet, expert advisers, permanent records—then you would ensure at all events that the Cabinet, who are the ultimate depositaries of power in this matter, shall have brought to their minds the real difficulties of the case, the real problems which they have to solve, the real necessities which they have to meet, and the best way of meeting them. Then it will rest with them to say whether they will take the whole advice which is given—advice, of course, always involves corresponding expenditure—or whether they will take part of the advice, or, indeed, what plan they will adopt. Some gentlemen have suggested that, where in any case the responsible advisers of the Committee of the Cabinet differed from the Cabinet, they should have the right to publish their opinion, so that the House of Commons, having the case of the experts put before them in a Memorandum, and the case of the Government in speeches by Ministers of the Crown, should decide between the two and make up their minds to which they mean to adhere. I see advantages in this plan, but I see great difficulties also. It appears to put everybody concerned in an almost impossible position. I am afraid that we shall have to address whatever Government is in power. I do not see how you can

possibly have two Governments in power. You cannot have two Ministries, one sitting in this House and the other a set of permanent officials sitting in an office. You must have one Ministry, and that one Ministry must be responsible to this House, and I do not see how they could carry out their work if the rivals sitting at Whitehall had the power of making direct communications to this House, and the House deciding by their votes as between the Ministers and the officials. The House will see that I profess to possess no clear-cut or perfectly satisfactory solution of this great difficulty. I recognise all the pitfalls which lie on either side of the path; but I do believe that, without either revolutionising our Parliamentary system, without altering the responsibility of Ministers of the Crown, without doing anything which could injure the susceptibilities either of the Army or the Navy, it would be possible by some such changes in our Cabinet system or some such addition to or modification of our Cabinet system as I have suggested, to bring home so clearly to the mind of the Ministers of the day the real dangers and necessities connected with the problem of national defence, that no Government, having the facts before them, would dare to ignore them; and we might rest secure, not only that the Government had the best advice at their disposal, but that on the whole, so far as was consistent with their general policy, the advice of the competent advisers was likely to be followed.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The tone and character of the speech to which we have just listened, and of the speeches which preceded it in this Debate, may suffice in themselves to indicate the great importance of the question raised by my right hon. Friend. He brought forward with great ability and clearness what he conceives to be a want in our present system of Government as applied to questions of national defence, and my right hon. Friend has made suggestions in a moderate and tentative way which I, for one, shall not be disposed lightly to put aside. My right hon. Friend, rather, I suppose, by way of disparaging my opinion, said that I was an optimist. I presume an optimist is one who

prefers to look on the sunny side of things. I have done that all my life, and I hope I shall go on doing it. My right hon. Friend said I was an optimist with regard to the old lines of Army administration; and I ventured to shake my head. My right hon. Friend in his speech made no distinction between Army organisation and Army administration. So far as Army organisation is concerned, I am an optimist to such a degree as I shall explain when I introduce the Estimates in Committee of Supply; but I am not an optimist in regard to the question of Army administration, because, as much that I have done and said will show, many things exist with respect to which there is great room for improvement. So far as observations have been made upon the Army system by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite and by my right hon. Friend, I think that those observations were suitable rather for the Debate which will follow this on the Army Estimates themselves. When I hear wholesale denunciations of our present Army system, when I hear that the Government of India disapproves of it, when I hear that it produces inefficiency in all quarters of the world, and that it would be so easy, for the same money, and without adding a single man, to produce something very much better, I cannot but remember all the schemes for that purpose, including some, I think, by my right hon. Friend, which I have seen analysed in a ruthless manner and pulled to pieces, the expense of them calculated, and the conclusions that were come to respecting them. Having seen all these schemes, many of which may in themselves have a more logical and complete appearance than our present system, which is undoubtedly a mixed system adapted to many ends, I much prefer still to abide by the system we have and to make the best of it, rather than to adopt any of those great changes which have been suggested. I merely say that as the question of the Army system has been introduced. But the real question which is before the House now is whether we, by our present arrangements, have that unity of policy for the defence of the country which is necessary. Abundant allusions have, of course, been made to the Hartington Commission of 1890. It has been said

that that Commission condemned in the clearest terms what has been called the existing system. Yes, the system which existed in 1890; but my right hon. Friend and others who take that line forget that four or five years have elapsed since that inquiry. I can assure them, of my own knowledge and on my own authority, that many of the events and facts which impressed the minds of the members of that Commission, of which I was a member, are now quite impossible, in consequence of the arrangements that are made for consultation and co-operation between the two Departments. I will give an instance at once, because a concrete instance is sometimes more effective than a general statement. The instance is one which was brought before the Commission, and greatly impressed me at the time. In providing for the defence of a certain foreign station, works had been erected at great expense, and no doubt with the greatest propriety from the point of view of the advising military officer, for the purpose of guarding a certain approach to a main fortress. But when the works had been completed, and when the opinion of naval officers came to be taken, the naval officers said that the approach was one which no seaman with a head on his shoulders would ever think of going up, and therefore the whole of that work was practically thrown away. This is an example which shows the sort of danger we were incurring at that time; it is an instance of what we were liable to under the old system, but it is impossible now. We have a Joint Naval and Military Committee, comprising the most eminent professional officers in each Department, who consult and deliberate on every point in regard to the defence either of the shores of this country or of any foreign station. Beyond that, there is the most perfect co-operation, even on those questions of high military policy which have been referred to between the high officers of the two Departments. So when I heard to-night hon. Members saying that there is absolutely no scheme for combined defence or operations I wondered from what source those hon. Members derived the information which was the basis of their confident assertions. But I am one of those who agree with my right hon. Friend, and with the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, that

we ought to go further. After the criticism which my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has passed upon the two proposals that have been made—one for a Minister of National Defence, and the other for a sort of treasurer, I think he was called, who was to sit with a Captain-General of the Army on one side and a Lord High Admiral on the other side, and to dispense all the justice he could between them—as to these two suggestions I need not say much. Neither of them recommends itself to me. My right hon. Friend, in introducing this subject, said the Minister is at present too much encumbered with details. I am not one who fall into that error; but the particular details to which here-ferred, the letters received about all sorts of apparently trifling matters, are not, I think, to be entirely disregarded, because really it is only by being brought into contact with details that a Minister can know how a Department is proceeding and have his mind opened to a great many higher questions which otherwise would escape notice. The great objection that was brought at the time of the Hartington Commission against the present system was this—that you took a pure politician, who knew nothing of Army matters or of Navy matters, and put him at the head of the Army or the Navy. It was asked, How can you expect such a civilian to be an efficient head of the Army or the Navy? And the odd cure suggested is that you should take another politician—one equally ignorant of both Services—and assign him the duty of managing them both. That plain statement of the case is enough to condemn the proposed Minister of National Defence without going further. I will not proceed to discuss the alternative of the treasurer, with a naval and a military adviser on either side. As the right hon. Gentleman said, I do not see where his place would come in. The head of each Service ought to be of Cabinet rank; but I do not see what the position of the treasurer would be, because when he turned away from his Captain-General and his Lord High Admiral, he would have to face the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who might have something to say to his decisions; and it would be very difficult to adjust the proper hierarchical position

of each of these three officers. Then I come to the proposal, which certainly is much more practical, and commends itself much more to me, that there should be more definite control on the part of the Cabinet over the administration of the two Services. In the latter part of his Motion the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean has a clause with reference to professional advisers which I do not quite understand, and of which I am a little suspicious. I think it would be desirable—in fact, necessary—that the Ministers for War and Marine and the Prime Minister, acting as a Committee of National Defence, should have the amplest information from the highest officers of the Army and the Navy as to all points of detail. But I should be slow to exalt these professional officers into any position which would give them higher standing with reference to the Committee of the Cabinet. The Committee of the Cabinet, if it knew its business, would freely ask their opinions, just as a Minister in his own separate Department does now; he would be a poor administrator and a foolish man who did not consult his professional advisers, or who sought to override them in matters upon which they were infinitely better able to form a judgment than himself. At the same time, the thing we must keep hold of is responsibility to this House for the spending of public money. The persons who must be supreme in these matters are the persons who find the money and who have to pay for the service. However much I should be disposed to pay deference to professional opinion, from one Service or the other, I hope that nothing will be done or suggested by the House of Commons which will detract not only from the responsibility, but from the absolute power of Ministers over that which involves so large a demand on the Public Purse. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington said that at present there was no responsibility on the part of a Minister to Parliament. He asked who ever heard of a Minister being impeached or censured. But I may point out that if a Minister enters upon a foolish course, he is very soon made to feel that the House of Commons does not approve of it, and he will not persist in it. He will, in fact,

avoid it in the future. He is here in touch with those who represent the taxpayers, who represent public opinion in the country. In that sense he is responsible as much as any man can be. The noble Lord suggests that we should have a naval officer at the head of the Admiralty and a military officer at the head of the War Office; but what responsibility would they be under to this House if each was absolutely supreme in his own Department, and if the Minister representing each Department in this House was either on a level with them or inferior to them, or a mere clerk or treasurer? With the plan which the noble Lord suggested there would be very little responsibility here, because the Minister would be really acting under the advice and direction of others; and they would not be here at all, so that the House of Commons would lose its control over the whole business. The noble Lord seems to be impressed with the view that pure civil control in these Departments is an evil. One cannot imagine a civilian Minister altogether exceeding the bounds of his duty by disregarding the advice received by him; but a civilian Minister who knows how to administer a Department is probably the best head of it, better than a professional head, because he brings to the consideration of professional questions a little of that outside feeling which professional officers are sometimes too ignorant of. I can assure my right hon. Friend who brought the Motion forward that I personally sympathise with the object which he has in view, in as far as it is to bring about a more direct control by the Cabinet over these great Departments, and in as far as it means greater unity of policy. I do not agree with the view that this Committee of the Cabinet should determine what share of expenditure should go to each Service, as though it were so many spoonfuls of pudding. It should rather determine the respective parts to be played by these Services, and the distribution of the money would follow the definition of those parts. In this sense I express general agreement with the object which my right hon. Friend has in view. I entertain almost identically the opinion which has been expressed by the Leader of the Opposition. When we touch the Cabinet and its organisation we get into a very ethereal region; and I am not

sure that it would not be a great innovation to have a permanent Committee of the Cabinet with the records kept and undertaking all the duties which have been ascribed to it to-night.

SIR C. W. DILKE: Minutes are kept now, are they not?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I must not answer. It would be most improper for me to do so. But, reserving my opinion as to the precise form which this more unified system might take, I am generally in sympathy with the view of my right hon. Friend.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, that one point raised by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had been rather missed in the general review of the subject. A Committee of the Cabinet to be called together only, as hitherto, on points of dispute between the Army and the Navy was not even a large part of the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. He desired a Committee which would actively exert itself to see that the relations between the two Services with respect to their organisation for war were properly treated. After all, almost the greatest difficulty under which the Secretary for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty laboured at present was that presented by their relations to the Treasury in matters of detail. In matters of principle there was a direct appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who might be trusted to exercise a fair judgment on the points laid before him; but many of the points which were raised in the House of Commons, and which seemed most unreasonable, were due to the manner in which the Treasury controlled the details of administration both at the War Office and at the Admiralty. Those details frequently involved an absolute control over the principles of administration. For instance, the Secretary for War or the First Lord of the Admiralty were not allowed either by the House or by the Treasury to grant a single sixpence as pension except under certain Rules, and yet when they wanted work done they could go and expend £10,000 or £25,000. Not even the Chancellor of the Exchequer could relieve the Secretary for War from the disabilities of that magical day, the 31st of March. On that day the money voted for the Army, if not spent, was taken to pay off the National Debt.

Thus, if certain Services which the House of Commons might have declared to be necessary were not completed by the 31st of March, they could only be carried out at the expense of the Army generally, for the money voted to those purposes would be appropriated to the payment of the National Debt. These points connected with the control of the Treasury ought not to be left out of consideration by the right hon. Gentleman when deciding upon the remodelling of the organisation of our forces. There had been Committee after Committee appointed on this subject, and there was the Report of the Hartington Commission. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not wait for further inquiries, but would be able to announce during the present Session that the question had at last been put on a satisfactory basis.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, that as the right hon. Gentleman had included the Navy in this pernicious Resolution he must say a word. He was glad to find that in his indictment the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had said very little but what was complimentary of the Navy. He was bound to say he had not found a single naval officer—and he had consulted a great many—who shared the views of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman had not proved his case. He had not in his excellent speech advanced a single fact to show a want of co-operation between the Army and the Navy when an emergency demanded such co-operation. Indeed, he had run away from his guns, for although in a letter he had published he had said he wanted a Minister of National Defence, he had said scarcely a word on that proposal in his speech. Naval men were perfectly satisfied with the present system; and they would not approve any system of official co-operation between the two Services which would put naval interests in the background. They must not hamper naval men in the discharge of their duties. Lord Hartington's Commission reported that no European Power had united the administration of the two Services under one Minister, and that all the naval witnesses whose evidence they heard were unanimously of opinion that under such a system the interests of the Navy would suffer. A clever civilian might grasp

military affairs; but in naval matters, so much technical and scientific knowledge was required nowadays, the civilian politician did not exist who could properly discharge the duty of Minister of Marine alone. The Secretary of State for War had that evening alluded to this point at great length, and had shown that the Cabinet had at its command the power at any time to summon distinguished men together and to take and act upon their advice. There were many distinguished officers who by the Rules of the Service had unfortunately had to retire at the age of 65. Some of these might well be called upon to form a Council. That being so, he contended that it was unnecessary for the Government to upset the present system, and to introduce any of the new-fangled notions now put forward. So far as he could gather from personal conversations he had lately had with officers holding very high positions in the Navy, the criticisms of the Service were favourable to his contention—that the old system worked well. Naval men alone were qualified to pass really trustworthy criticism on purely naval matters; and where difficulties arose involving military as well as naval questions the Government should at once appoint a Joint Committee, whose Report should be very carefully considered and acted upon by them. It was well known that this course was adopted before the Crimean War and the Egyptian Expedition were entered upon. The Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman now before the House might find favour among certain politicians, but it would not be accepted by those who were practically acquainted with the internal economy of either branch of the Service. It was not the business of politicians to interfere in matters relating to that branch of the Service at all. And he therefore appealed to the right hon. Gentleman not to upset a system which now worked so advantageously.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said, he cordially approved what had fallen from the Secretary for War and from the Leader of the Opposition. This was by no means a Departmental question. There were other Departments of State, as well as the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Treasury, which must be con-

sulted before taking any new steps in these matters. There was the Colonial Office, for example. In the Colonies we had an organization numbering between 60,000 and 70,000 men, including in those figures their incipient infant Navy, and he contended that in any change which would directly affect them it would only be fair—and, indeed, it would be necessary—to consult the opinion of our colonists before passing such a measure. It was impossible to put with safety all this power in connection with the defence of the Empire into the hands of one person. This fact alone constituted one of the difficulties of limiting the responsibility as now proposed to one Minister.

*CAPTAIN NAYLOR - LEYLAND (Colchester) said, he thought that he was right in assuming that he must couple the statements made by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean before the House that evening with the expression of his views that he had set out in a letter not very long ago on the subject which appeared in *The Times* and which attracted a great deal of public attention and comment. In that letter the right hon. Gentleman took exception to the present system of administration with regard to both the Services, chiefly on the ground that under present conditions there was not sufficient Parliamentary responsibility in the sense that two Ministers who now sat in the House had not complete control over both branches of the Service, and did not act together. That was a grave accusation to bring against both the Army and the Navy Executive, and he thought that some very strong and cogent proofs should have been produced by the right hon. Gentleman in support of such a sweeping statement. No details had, however, been given. The right hon. Gentleman told them he was not going to discuss details, but how were they to prove any system in the world not to be good or bad if they declined to discuss details? What he personally wanted to know was whether his right hon. Friend considered certain parts only of the present system at fault, or whether he wished to contend that the whole of the present system was irreparably bad? He thought he could show that the present system was better than the one proposed. He could not see himself how the present Parliamen-

tary organisation could be improved upon. The two branches of the Service were now represented by the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty respectively, and the two jointly constituted the Cabinet Committee of Defence. The First Lord of the Admiralty had the assistance of a number of Naval Lords. The Secretary of State for War had to advise him the Commander-in-Chief. As these two Ministers were on a footing of equality in the Cabinet, and were of the same political Party, they had every incentive to work successfully and harmoniously together. No proof had been given that the system had failed. The facts, indeed, pointed in an entirely opposite direction, and he therefore objected to the idea that under the present *régime* these two representative Ministers did not work hand in hand, and that strong pressure to ensure their doing so ought in future to be put upon them. An objection had been taken by that high authority the hon. Member for West Belfast that some of the field battalions were kept too long on peace strength. To keep up the effective strength of the battalions when no war was expected would be distinctly wrong, and therefore the present system could not be blamed on that ground. We already had one Army Corps, and, thanks to the Reserve, we could in two or three months raise another Army Corps, but England was not going to invade a Continental country. Soldiers were needed in this country for little wars and for a land frontier, as in Canada and India. Canada might be put out of the question; but we had one Army Corps and a prospective Army Corps to be established as in the case of a Russian invasion of India. Was it alleged that this was not sufficient? The right hon. Baronet had written a book on the subject of Imperial defence, and in it the right hon. Gentleman had stated a view with which he concurred, and what he believed was the view of the most competent military authorities, that in the event of war on our Indian frontier it would be necessary to supplement the Army of India with two Army Corps, and it was in view of that situation that two Army Corps had been fixed as the standard to be attained in our Army. The hon. Member for West Belfast said that he wanted more detailed information; but for what purpose? Was it proposed

that strategical plans drawn up by the War Office should be published to the world? The fact that the Member for West Belfast did not know of them was no proof that they did not exist. The only advantage of having any plans at all in connection with the Army and the Navy was that they should be kept secret, so that when war was declared the authorities might be able to act upon them and put them to practical use. The hon. and gallant Admiral who last spoke told them such plans existed at the Admiralty, and he had no doubt the same system was adopted at the War Office. Reference had been made to the German Army. No doubt the Chief of the Staff in the German Army was a useful person; and though it might be of some advantage to have one official to make out plans and to work them out in practical detail, it must not be forgotten that when this was accomplished the officer did not tell everyone about those plans, but kept them as secret as he could. He did not agree with the Member for West Belfast, that Ministers of Defence existed on the Continent. Though the German Emperor was the Minister of Defence for Germany, it might equally be said that in the same sense Her Majesty was the Minister of Defence for this country, because technically she was at the head of the British Army. But below the German Emperor there was a Consultative Committee of three, and they represented practically what in the Navy were the Lords of the Admiralty. In the whole military history of the world recently there was only one instance in which a Minister of Defence, on the lines now proposed, had been appointed. That was by the American Government in the last century. It was found to be such a dismal failure, that the post was abolished. The only object in having a Consultative Committee composed of two professional officers, a military and a naval, would be for the Army officer to give his advice in naval, and the naval in military, affairs: he submitted this was preposterous and absurd. In the reign of Charles II. the mistake was made of placing a Cavalry officer at the head of the Navy and an Admiral in charge of the land forces, and it was not likely we should repeat that error.

*SIR C. W. DILKE: As the Leader of the Opposition has taken a first step towards the attainment of the object I have in view, and the Secretary for War has expressed as clearly as official reticence renders it possible his concurrence in the view of the Leader of the Opposition, I shall ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVE SOLDIERS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, that in drawing attention to the Notice of Motion standing in his name he felt that he ought to apologise for calling their attention to rather an old worn subject; but as it was of such vital importance to the Army, he thought he had right on his side in doing so. He thought it was as important to find the men for the Army as to elaborate schemes such as the one they had just heard for dealing with the men when they got them into the Army. And he was the more inclined to do so because the present Secretary of State for War had shown a benevolent sympathy towards them when they had earned the right, as Reserve men and discharged soldiers, to obtain employment. If the right hon. Gentleman were in his place he should have been glad to have congratulated him on the recruiting Return that had just been issued, because he believed the condition of the recruits and the satisfactory state of the recruiting department was largely due to the right hon. Gentleman, who had greatly improved the condition of the private soldier in barracks, in regard to his clothing, his sea kit, and comfort generally, and by so doing had caused recruiting to look better this year than for a considerable time past. The question to which he desired to call the attention of the House was not one of sentiment, but purely one of business. The War Department had got to find 40,000 recruits every year; it had got to get them from somewhere, because, unlike the Continental countries, ours was a volunteer and not a conscript Army, and the result was, that in order to get recruits, they had to prepare a trap. A good deal of that sort of thing had been done during past times; but whilst the right hon. Gentleman had been in Office

matters had considerably altered, for which the right hon. Gentleman was entitled to the thanks of the Army. But one thing, and that one of the most important, had been practically omitted from the consideration of the War Office in this matter, and that was the employment of the Reserve and discharged men, which was a matter insisted upon by every Inspector General of Recruiting, from Lord Cameron down to General Fielding, who was now Inspector General of Recruiting at the War Office, and the matter had been alluded to by every man on Lord Wantage's Committee, about which they had heard so much two years ago. It was a patriotic necessity, and would have to be done sooner or later. The condition of things appeared to be that practically about 30,000, more or less, took their discharge annually; of these about 17,000 went into the Army Reserve. These figures were approximately correct, for 600,000 men during the last 20 years had been discharged from the Army. The question that presented itself to some of them was what had become of all those men. If they believed the statements of General Booth, which did not gain universal credence, they found that something like 10 per cent. of them formed the corner men in the streets, but certainly every man who kept his eyes open could see that a very great proportion of the men on tramp and those taking refuge in the casual wards were Reserve and discharged soldiers. The condition of these men was most miserable; they could not get employment owing to the fear that employers entertained of their being called out; they could not emigrate, as that would render a Reserve man liable to prosecution, and therefore they were allowed to starve on 6d. a day, as it was not enough to keep them in a decent condition or to get them proper food. A manufacturer, as a rule, would not take on Reserve men because they were liable to be called out on service, and there was another feeling that if the Government would not do anything to find places for these men there was no reason why manufacturers should put themselves out of the way for that purpose. There were, however, some notable exceptions; some of the railways largely employed Reserve men, amongst them the London and North Western, and the London,

Chatham, and Dover, and some large manufacturers in London. One large firm of manufacturers in the Midland Counties, represented in this House by a gentleman sitting on the other side, was honourably distinguished in its employment of Reserve and discharged soldiers. He would ask how it was possible to carry on recruiting under favourable conditions while thousands of discharged soldiers were going about the country decrying the Army and advising their friends not to enlist? An old soldier—and nowadays a man was an old soldier at the age of about 25—went amongst his people and said, “I enlisted; I was promised a free kit and rations, and got neither. When I took my discharge I was unable to obtain employment; I am nobody’s child; I am a wanderer on the face of the earth, and I would advise you not to take the Queen’s shilling.” They did not ask that the Government should find a berth for all these men as Directors or at the Bank of England; but they might do something, and he would point out what he thought they might do without expense, and afterwards what they might do in another way that would cause a little extra expense. They might find more work than they did for these men at Enfield and Woolwich. Something like 12,000 workmen were employed at Enfield and Woolwich, of whom about 4,000 were labourers, and these places could be very well taken by Reserve and discharged soldiers. They all knew that a Return was recently issued—one he moved for himself—showing the number of Government Offices which might be filled by old soldiers, but which was not filled by them, these posts being occupied by the nominees of gentlemen who had no connection with the Army. There were various berths that might be filled by old soldiers at Kew Gardens, the National Gallery, and the British Museum. During the late Government the right hon. Gentleman who was in charge of the Post Office, the Member for Manchester (Sir J. Fergusson), took a step which was cordially approved by men connected with the Service. The right hon. Gentleman gave employment in the Post Office to Reserve and discharged men. But after the retirement of the right hon. Gentleman that arrangement was allowed to lapse, and he knew he

was right in saying that during the last three months only some 5 per cent. of the Reservists had found berths in the Post Office. He believed very many of the Postmasters wished to put their sons into the telegraph messenger service, and then promote them to postmen, but that was not the intention of the late Government and the Postmaster General at that time. He would venture to point out what he thought the Government should do. They ought to establish a central bureau at the War Office, having branch offices at all the dépôt centres, where a list should be kept of the names of these men, so that they could thus obtain work when they wanted it. It would not cost much to have these offices all over the country, and the Government might also strengthen the hands of existing Associations that found employment for Reserve and discharged soldiers. Except for a small grant from the Government, these Associations were supported by voluntary contributions; they had found employment for 4,000 of these men last year, and they had found employment for 12,000 soldiers during the six years they had been established, and had enabled them to earn an aggregate of wages amounting to something like £750,000. He thought these Associations were worthy of more support than they got from Her Majesty’s Government, and he failed to see why the Government should not support them more than they did by an extra grant. In foreign countries they found that every non-commissioned officer, after 15 years’ service, was entitled to a berth under the Government, and in Germany there were 70,000 berths which soldiers could obtain under the Government. In Austria-Hungary something like 15,000 soldiers were employed on the railways, and he could not understand why the Government should not adopt some system of the kind in this country. He could not understand how it was that the House could vote large sums of money with a light heart for objects not so important as this. Only last night the House voted £60,000 for the ranges at Shoeburyness when they ought not to require a tenth of that sum. Though the Secretary for War had done much, he thought he might do more. The right hon. Gentleman was the first War

Minister who ever advised the Treasury to give a grant to an Association for finding employment for discharged soldiers, and when he came into Office again six years afterwards he increased the grant; and if the right hon. Gentleman would only use the great influence he possessed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would be able to still further increase the sum. By so doing he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would not only earn the gratitude of soldiers and the men who represented them in this House, but would be giving the greatest support to recruiting all over the country, and earn the gratitude of the British soldier all over the world. At this time of the day he did not wish to detain the House further, and would simply move the Motion standing in his name.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somerset, Wellington) said, he agreed with his hon. and gallant Friend as to the want of employment for Reserve and discharged soldiers, and the deplorable effect the want of employment must have on the recruiting. In walking through London he was frequently appealed to by men who had served with the Colours to get them employment—men who bore excellent characters. There was also another matter closely connected with this subject, and that was the great number of men who were employed in fatigues in their garrison towns and large camps—men who were serving with the Colours. He did not think any hon. Member could go to Aldershot or any garrison town without finding a large number of men employed in fatigues; not military fatigues, but in weeding gardens, looking after the washhouse, and other duties that were not military but civilian, and women's duties. It was with great regret that he saw men employed in that way and taken from their military work. How was it to be expected that a commanding officer could get his men ready for inspection and field days when half his men were taken away for these duties? They did not clothe men in the Queen's uniform for these domestic purposes, but to make soldiers of them, and to train them for that purpose. It had struck him, and he made this suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman, that many of these unemployed men in the Reserve could be used in their large camps and garrison towns to carry

out what he might call civilian fatigues. At the present moment they were paying men in the Army Reserve 6d. a day for practically doing nothing. A man left the Guards after three years and served nine years in the Reserves; in the Line he served five years in the Reserves; to call out all of them would take 40 years, so that it was obvious they would never all be called out; therefore, it came to this—that we were paying 6d. a day for the problematical chance of requiring their services in the event of war. He would therefore suggest that they should pay them a little more and make them do some of these ordinary garrison and camp fatigues. The advantage of that would be that they would have the whole of the men serving with the Colours available for drill, musketry, and military duties, so that the commanding officers would be capable of turning out a proper fighting machine; and, secondly, a great number of Army men would not be travelling about the country contracting bad habits and advising people not to enlist, but who would be in touch with military life, and who could be trained in the use of the new rifle. In this way they would not have on field days and at inspection a number of what he might call amateur gardeners having in their hands a rifle of which they knew nothing. Another advantage would be that it would greatly relieve the labour market in London and our large towns. They heard a great deal about the unemployed, and these were made up in great part by Army Reserve men; therefore, if they found employment for these men in fatigue duties, they would to a large extent relieve the labour market. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"This House deplores the want of employment among discharged and Reserve men, and calls on the Government to remedy the evil by strengthening the existing voluntary institutions or forming a bureau at the War Office for that purpose,"—(*Major Rasch*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

CAPTAIN BAGOT (Westmoreland, Kendal) thought that in this matter

what they required was more than general sympathy. Last year the inquiries of British *attachés* at Berlin and Paris and in Austria and Italy showed that the Continental system worked exceedingly well. In Continental countries they had a regular system under Government for giving employment to well-behaved old soldiers and sailors after a service of a certain number of years with the colours; and if they in this country were to do anything to popularise the Army and to induce a better class of recruit to join the Service it would be by adopting the Continental system. But he found that out of 7,860 places which the Government could fill with messengers and clerks only 417, or about 5 per cent., were filled by old soldiers or sailors of good character. In 1877 Mr. Childers's Committee recommended strongly in favour of some alteration in the existing state of affairs with regard to the employment of old soldiers and sailors, but, so far as he saw, nothing had been done to carry out its recommendations. As an example of some places that might be filled by the Government with such men, he would mention that at the British Museum since 1887 30 messengers had been appointed by the Government. In this and any other Public Department an old soldier or sailor would be well fitted for the position of messenger, but out of the 30 so appointed not a single one was either an old soldier or sailor. It might perhaps be said that the majority of the *attachés*, to whom he had referred, were soldiers, and might be supposed to be one-sided in favour of those who belonged to their own profession; but the Minister at Berlin, Sir E. Malet, was not a soldier, and in a letter accompanying his Report he wrote that if such employment were assured in the United Kingdom to soldiers of good conduct, the general public would gain largely through the increased efficiency of the Departments, as old soldiers of good character worked exceedingly well. That was the testimony of a civilian as to the advantage the Public Departments would gain by the appointment of these men. On the Continent there was conscription, but the British forces were entirely voluntary, and if they wished to obtain good recruits they must offer them some inducement; and if the men knew that

by good character they would obtain a situation when they left the Army, it would be an inducement to them to behave well while in the Army, as well as an inducement to enter it. He therefore hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give them an assurance or something more definite than mere general sympathy.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I can assure my hon. and gallant Friend who brought forward this Motion that I am able most sincerely to repeat my expression of sympathy that seems to be thought of so little value—not by him, as he was much too kind in the way he spoke of something I was able to do, and gives me credit for a good deal more than I have been able to do. At all events, I am extremely glad to be associated with him in obtaining employment for Reserve and discharged men in the Army. I have great sympathy with all that is said as to the desirableness of employing old and discharged soldiers, but I would caution hon. Members not to press it too far. I do not think it possible to give an absolute pledge of employment; I do not believe it would be possible, and it might be dangerous to convey the idea that such a pledge had been given. It must be remembered that old soldiers—and I say it as one sincerely their friend—do not monopolise all the claims to the charitable and benevolent consideration of the public; there are many others in the community who have to be considered. We have gone as far as we can in the way of employment under Government Departments. Some of the instances mentioned, where it is thought more might be done, do not relate to Government Departments at all. I imagine that those persons employed at the British Museum are employed by the Trustees of the Museum. Then we are shown the example of Germany and other foreign countries who provide large numbers of places for old soldiers. Yes, but there the whole of the railway system and many other large public sources of employment are in the hands of the State, and they can employ whom they like, whereas in this country there is only a limited number of posts to which old soldiers can be appointed in the Public Departments. Allusion has been made to the Post

Office and what was done by my right hon. Friend opposite, the late Postmaster General. There has been no going back from anything that has been done, and from what I have heard on inquiry not many weeks ago I am satisfied there is just the same proportion of Reserve men and old soldiers being employed in the Post Office as was the case a few years ago. One thing I confess I have an objection to—namely, that in order to encourage recruiting in the Army, Post Office messengers or boys should be promised further employment in the Department if they went into the Army and served their time there as soldiers. I do not think that is in accordance with the voluntary system of service which we have been accustomed to in this country. Though not quite a kind of conscription the practice forms really a species of practical compulsion of service, and I do not think that is a good or proper arrangement. We should remember that even in the Post Office when a vacancy occurs for a messenger or in any other capacity the Department has to consider the claims of their own servants as well as the claims of old soldiers. From all the inquiries I have made I am satisfied that a full chance is given for employment of old soldiers in the Post Office at the present time just as existed a year or two ago. Then as to what we can do for Societies in this matter. The War Office gives a contribution towards the Society which undertakes the business connected with outside employment; but from the best advice we can get from those who are best acquainted with the matter, we are opposed to going further, and establishing a bureau at the War Office. It is thought that a bureau at the War Office would be an isolated office—that there would be very little practical acquaintance with the circumstances of each case, and that you can better employ the agencies of a private institution which would offer a chance of employment on the spot to old soldiers who sought it. I have been somewhat struck with some figures I have received on the subject. To begin with, let me quote this from a very strong advocate of the employment of old soldiers. General Feilding says that from reliable sources of information it is believed there are no large numbers of soldiers who have been discharged from

the Army with good characters and of sober habits who have not been able to obtain employment of some kind after their discharge. That is a very strong opinion coming from a General Officer who is as intimately acquainted with the subject as any one I could mention. And the figures he quotes are these. There were registered in the local registers of the Association within the year 6,775 men for employment; of those 3,824 were offered employment, and 2,914 accepted it, while 847 declined. It does not appear from that that want of employment arises from a lack of opportunity of getting it. The War Office gives a contribution towards the Society which undertakes this business connected with outside employment, and on a very wholesome plan. We give to it half the amount that the public have subscribed to it in the previous year. I think that is a very good test of the healthiness of the Society we are supporting, for it must receive considerable public support before we grant anything. That is the foundation on which we have gone and will continue our contribution. We will do all we can, and personally I will do all I can in the way of finding employment in other Departments, but we must not be too sanguine of results on a great scale. I am sure the wish of every one in the House is to see full justice done to these old soldiers. The hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite suggests that they should be employed in connection with the camps. But that would only be for a short time in the year, and would not afford any very large amount of employment. The Government will keep their eyes and ears open, and if in any way assistance can be rendered I shall be only too ready to help. But hon. Members must dismiss from their minds the idea that in this country we can ever possess such a power as is possessed by the Governments of other countries—the power of finding places for all the men who have served their country in the ranks of the Army.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, it was evident there was a strong feeling—which he knew that the right hon. Gentleman shared—that if any step could be taken for the employment of old soldiers either in the Reserve or only partially employed, it would be of great

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

service to the Army and to the public. No doubt it was extremely difficult to make progress in this matter. The employment of old soldiers in the Public Offices remained practically where it was four or five years ago ; and he thought the right hon. Gentleman would admit that, looking at the subject as a whole, practically no progress had been made during the last few years. At the same time, he must urge upon the right hon. Gentleman that there was room for taking up this subject in a more active manner. My right hon. Friend had given some particulars in this matter, but whether with regard to his own administration or that of his predecessors certainly the policy was the same. As the Select Committee of 1877 had been alluded to, he would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman opposite this question. Since that Committee reported 17 years had passed ; and though efforts had been made by himself, as by his predecessors, to get employment for old soldiers and sailors, they had not been quite so successful as could be wished. They did not object on that side of the House to a Select Committee being appointed by this House, not to inquire into the whole question, but to inquire how far the suggestions of the Committee of 1877 had been carried out, what remained to be done by the Government which had not been done at the present time, and what had been done by private enterprise in this matter ; and also to inquire into the question of the establishment of a Labour Bureau, either in connection with the War Office or in connection with the dépôts. He did not wish for a moment to press his right hon. Friend or to force his hand. He knew the right hon. Gentleman had the subject fully at heart. He knew also that this was but one among a number of Public Departments, and that they could not control others ; but a point had been reached when some further inquiry of a limited scope, which need not occupy a very long time or involve the examination of any great number of witnesses, would be advantageous to the Army. Such a step would take away from private employers great responsibilities, while enabling them to carry out a great duty, and would give an assurance to the public that employment would be found for old soldiers. Every patriotic English-

man ought to do his best in furtherance of such an object.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I can only say, in the first place, that I will turn the suggestion over in my mind, but I scarcely think the matter is pressing enough to justify such a step. Perhaps I may add that one of my colleagues has informed me that a messenger-ship having become vacant in his Office, he has declined to present an old butler, and has decided to recommend a retired soldier, and he has written to the War Office for that purpose.

*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, this was a question of great importance to the large towns throughout the country, and the Government Departments ought to set a much better example. In a great many large towns labour bureaux had been formed for enabling retired soldiers to obtain employment, and everything possible had been done to render them assistance. Although the right hon. Gentleman had done a great deal in this matter by doubling the official subscription to the head Society, it was hoped he would see his way to do more still. Between 1887 and 1893, out of 945 Government messengers appointed, only 324 were retired soldiers and sailors ; and out of 6,915 clerks only 93 were formerly in the Army, Navy, or Royal Marines. That was a very small proportion indeed. It was not only in the War Office, Admiralty, and Treasury Departments that such appointments might be made, but the messengers about the House might also be selected from deserving non-commissioned officers and those who had retired from the Army and the Navy. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman during the period that he remained Secretary of State for War would find himself able to do a little more than he had done in the past, and confer thereby great advantages upon the country and the Services. Every man who obtained employment on leaving the Services was an advertisement and an encouragement to recruiting. Seeing that good berths were obtained through the good offices of Government Departments other young men were induced to join the Army and Navy by being told by the retired men that after passing a pleasant time in the Service, and having done their duty to their country, if their con-

duct had been good the Government would take care of them.

*CAPTAIN GRICE - HUTCHINSON (Aston Manor) agreed that to further this object would be good for recruiting and for the good of the Army in general. How often it happened that the soldier realised that his years of service had been wasted, and that on leaving the Army he found himself without resources of livelihood. It was absolutely for the well-being of the Army that some steps should be taken in the matter, but he would suggest that there should be some alteration made in the system of deferred pay of the soldier in order to induce him to remain in the colours, instead of bribing him to go out of the Army. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would take this into consideration, for he felt that any alteration made in that respect would be for the benefit of the Services.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question again proposed.

MOBILISATION.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) desired to call attention to the organisation necessary for more rapid mobilising of the forces for home defence and the training of the Reserve. That question had not received the attention it deserved, and was well worthy of consideration by the House. Our Army was our second line of defence. Though it was small, we were spending about £18,000,000 a year upon it, and there was no reason why it should not be thoroughly efficient in all its departments. The reason why no great anxiety was shown in military matters was because the nation at large believed that all necessary measures were taken up to the requirements of the Army. He pointed out that the scheme of mobilisation existed only on paper, and had never been put to the test in any way whatever. The invasion of our shores seemed so improbable that people seemed hardly to recognise that such a scheme was essential to our safety as a nation. All the stores of clothing were concentrated at Pimlico. Could the Secretary of State for War assure him that it was sufficient for the wants of the whole Reserve force? Could he assure him

that all this clothing was marked for its destination, ready to leave the stores at Pimlico at once? To ask that all the Reserve forces throughout the Kingdom should be mobilised at once would probably be asking too much; but he asked that the scheme should be tested in one district. If the light of public opinion was thrown upon it much good would result. Mobilisation was really organisation of forces in readiness for the field—i.e., bringing up the units to war strength. No doubt our present system was a good one, and a great deal of time and attention had been devoted to it by experts. The late Mr. Stanhope had said that we had a scheme of mobilisation which we could act upon to-morrow if there was any danger of invasion. It was difficult to persuade the public that there was anything to fear in that direction, but that was an event possible at all events, and some actual working scheme of mobilisation was necessary for our national safety. Let the Secretary of State take any district he liked, give orders to the general officer commanding to mobilise at once, let the general officer issue his instructions by telegraph, and then the scheme would be submitted to a practical test, and they would be able to see how the system worked and where its failures were. They would also be able to test the system of the centralisation of stores at Pimlico. He did not believe that they would be able to get the stores out in time. They should always count on the possibility of mistakes. They had heard of mistakes in connection with our small wars, when a different ammunition from the ammunition required would be sent out. These mistakes showed that the centralisation of stores would hardly bear the strain put upon it in a time of great national danger. In close connection with the matter of mobilisation were the questions of the ammunition used by the Volunteers and the different patterns of machine guns in use. He would urge on the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War the necessity for taking those matters into consideration. The question of the training and exercising of our Reserve forces was also an important point for consideration. At present the training was not carried on as efficiently or on as broad a plan as it ought to be, especially when compared with the

Colonel Howard Vincent

system adopted by military nations on the Continent.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I would appeal to the House that we should now go into Committee, because in the statement I intend to make I can reply to the various points that have been raised.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

[Sir J. GOLDSMID in the Chair.]

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 155,347, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895."

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : Sir, I cannot proceed to the duty of submitting these Estimates to the Committee without referring to one sad subject. We all look instinctively to the vacant place on the other side of this Table, which on the last occasion when military questions were under discussion was occupied by one who for several years had taken a prominent part in these Debates. I will not attempt to renew the panegyrics which at the moment of our loss were so truly and worthily passed upon Mr. Stanhope, but no one has better reason than I, who succeeded him in Office, to appreciate the amount of abiding advantage which the Military Service of our country gained from his intelligent administration and from his untiring zeal and devotion. The year which has passed since I last discharged this duty has been comparatively uneventful, and I am fully aware that these Estimates present few features calculated to draw attention to, or to excite a lively interest in, military administration. I remember that on the corresponding occasion last year I openly disclaimed for myself any intention of being an active innovator. I said that the Army had within the last 20 years passed through a great series of alterations, reforms, and new developments, and that, in my opinion, we, having arrived at something like a fixed system,

and a system which in its main lines commended itself to the best and most experienced men, so far as I am aware, it was now better to leave that system in the main to its natural working, while, of course, taking care to watch for every opportunity of amending it in its minor details, if the necessity could be shown to exist. Having been strongly in favour of the changes of the last 20 years, and believing in the newer Army system, I am sure that the best way of securing its success is to follow the course of confirming and consolidating it rather than to initiate at present any new departure. But I can readily believe that there is one feature in these Estimates which may seem to require some explanation. I mean the evidence which they display of growing expenditure. It may be asked why the Committee should be invited to vote an addition to an expenditure already so great, and whether it would not have been possible to meet, by some modification of these demands, a part of the great increase in the cost of the naval strength which the circumstances of the day are generally considered to require. The first consideration which presents itself in that matter is, how far does the one branch of expenditure take the place of the other, and, secondly, does our land force in itself admit of a reduction? It is not the case that by increasing the Navy you necessarily diminish the necessity for Army Estimates. In fact, in many respects, it is the reverse, because the larger the fleet and the wider the duties it has to undertake in the protection of trade, the heavier in some respects becomes the charge upon the Army Estimates for the protection of harbours and coaling stations, both in men and in works, as well as in armaments for their protection. In this respect one is not in the least an alternative of the other, but rather its necessary complement. But if the naval expenditure was a mere absolute addition to our defensive strength, has it been carried so far as to supersede the necessity of any part of our land force? Our land force is no longer undetermined in the way it was 10 or 20 years ago. I remember the time when practically we went by rule of thumb in these matters. There was no fixed principle as to the purposes for which or the mode in which the

strength of our military establishments should be settled, and, accordingly, when any financial pressure occurred such as that which has recently presented itself, it was deemed the easiest thing in the world to take £500,000 or £1,000,000 from the Army Estimates and to reduce the Army by 10,000 or 20,000 men. There was no fixed actual standard, and therefore, in a light-hearted way, a reduction was made. The establishments were reduced one year and raised another; the reserves of stores were freely drawn upon, and, as all the figures were arbitrary, this was a very easy process. But a swift Nemesis followed upon every such occasion, and Vote of Credit after Vote of Credit showed the result of this mode of treating the Estimates. I am happy to say that that arbitrary and happy-go-lucky system has been discarded. Military science has advanced immensely of late years, but there is no science which has advanced more than that of Army organisation. We know now exactly what we have got to do and what we require, and those of us who are able to look back 20 years will recognise that that of itself is an immense stride. Now, what is it we have to do? We have to defend these Islands, we have to garrison India, we have to garrison the colonial fortresses, and we have to provide for the small wars which we have periodically to undertake. The three great purposes are the defence of these Islands, the defence of India, and the defence of the Colonies; and the question has often been raised whether for these purposes we should have three Armies or one. I am strongly in favour of having one Army for all purposes, because the variety of its service gives it experience and efficiency which it would soon lose under other conditions. We have had Committee after Committee and Commission after Commission to determine how this one Army is to be constituted, and with reference to the organisation of Infantry this one principle has at all events been laid down, that the great thing to bear in mind is that our establishments at home should be equal and continuous. By close inquiry and calculation we have found what force is required in this country to maintain drafts in order to keep our foreign Army in a state of efficiency, and we have arrived at the knowledge of the particular

proportion which the unit at home ought to bear to the drafts which have to be sent out annually to support the unit abroad. Then, considering the strength at home, I think that I may state, as the conclusion of the most competent authorities, that it is desirable to maintain in this country a movable force of about 80,000 men, or two Army Corps, for the purpose not only of making invasion impossible, but of making the very idea of invasion impossible. I think the Committee will agree with me that, although it may be a very good thing to be able to defeat an invasion when it is attempted, it is better still to maintain such a force that no one would think of attempting to invade the country, and that is, as I understand, the available force which is supposed to be necessary to accomplish that object. I mean, of course, a force of regular troops apart from the Militia and Volunteers, who would be largely used, as is known, for fortresses. I do not think that that is an unreasonable force, and our system is to make this force, so maintained, available for contributing to the foreign force, and to rely upon a moderately short service for a reserve to fill its ranks with seasoned men. That is our system, and it does not admit of that haphazard treatment which was possible in the days when we had no fixed system at all, and when everything was dealt with as occasion arose. This same policy has been followed with regard to stores. Each fighting unit has its fixed complement of stores, which are, or ought to be, ready for use at the proper places. I, of course, do not refer to the large quantity of stores that are easily improvised, but the others ought to be ready for use at their proper places, and store-houses have been provided for the purpose. This process, however, has not yet been completed, but towards its completion we are steadily moving. I have been asked what is to be done in case of mobilisation, and, as I have said, we are moving towards a more complete system. Mobilisation has not been confined entirely to paper; it has been tested for the first time this year. In May last the greater part of a division of the field army was brought together under the commanding officer for the South-Eastern District. The Reservists, however, were not called out, for the obvious

reason that there is no legal power to call them out in such circumstances. The Regular troops were on a peace footing, but their equipment was mustered, if not issued. The operation was not complete mobilisation, because neither in *personnel* nor in *matériel* was it on a complete war footing, but it is a beginning, and a fairly satisfactory beginning. I mention this because it is at least something to have tried the system, and how different it is from anything we were accustomed to in former years. I ask myself, therefore, are we justified, because of financial pressure, in undoing this scientific system and reproducing the undetermined provision of some years ago? If all this force is on too large a scale, if the best authorities were to say that it is unnecessary, if the Navy, for instance, were increased and were to guarantee absolute immunity from invasion, then we might dispense with what is superfluous. But we have no such assurance, and we have no such belief; and I know too much of the subject to propose any off-hand reduction, which, because it is not based on any fixed principle, can only lead in a short time to waste and inefficiency. I hope that anyone in my place will always be ready to watch for any opportunity for economy, but it is because I honestly believe that inconsiderate reduction would merely lead to greater expenditure shortly afterwards that I have been forced to ask the House to furnish me this year with so large a provision, a provision greater than that of last year, in consequence of some circumstances which we hope may be temporary in their nature. I regret to say that when I speak of the fixed and reasonable system on which the Army is organised, I cannot present it to the Committee as approaching perfection. I am well aware that it is far from perfect, especially in one particular, to which I referred last year, and which, I am sorry to say, remains as great a defect now as then. I refer to the unequal distribution of battalions between home and abroad. I expressed a hope last year that in the course of the year I should manage to equalise the battalions here and abroad, but unfortunately we have not been able to bring from Egypt the additional force which we thought was only temporarily sent there in the beginning of the year. If this state of things were to remain permanent we should be forced to con-

sider the costly cure of increasing the number of battalions at home, of adding battalions to the Army; but, having regard to the natural tendency of expenditure, as exemplified this year, to swell and develop, I hope we may not be driven to so extravagant a remedy. The total net amount in the Estimates is £18,080,900, showing a net increase of £278,100, and the increase over last year in the number of men is 905. Let me show how this is made up. There is an increase in Infantry of 539, which has been rendered necessary by the larger depôts maintained to supply more men for service with the colours with the additional force in Egypt. In the Artillery there is an increase of 100 men, caused by the dividing of the companies of garrison artillery into a smaller unit; they were doubled with a view to efficiency and economy, and the companies were adapted to particular stations with more or fewer officers as was found necessary. For the sake of convenience, in reliefs especially, it is found better to have smaller companies. There is an increase of about 100 men in the Royal Engineers, the greater part of which is for an extra company for the Ordnance Survey in order to carry on more quickly the work of the survey in England. The money effect is shown on page 1 of the Estimates. There is an increase in regimental pay and provisions of £56,000. The Vote for the Army Reserve, which has been steadily increasing, accounts for £54,900. There is a sum of £2,400 taken for the drilling and training of the Army Reserve, which will so far satisfy my hon. and gallant Friend; although a modest sum, it is in the right direction. The Militia, which has been exceedingly flourishing, accounts for £40,000 additional. The Volunteers, who, especially during the fine summer of last year, went into camp in large numbers, are estimated this year to cost £18,000 more than they did last year. The rise in the price of forage and coal accounts for £88,000. There is an additional annuity for the repayment of loans under the Barracks Act of £43,000. I must call attention to the fact that these annuities will go on increasing until the year 1910, when, if any of us remain, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that this liability is liquidated. There is a decrease on small arms principally of

£20,400, and on the non-effective service of £30,000. The real cause of the total increase may be said to be full establishments and some advance in prices. I have said in my Memorandum that recruiting is satisfactory—that is to say, we obtain all the men we require. The number of men recruited in 1892 was 29,238, and last year 25,788, a number which fully met our requirements. In the earlier part of the year, as has been stated, we absolutely did away with special enlisting, but afterwards it had to be allowed, although it was laid down that there should be a reference to headquarters before recruits were passed into the Army. We have achieved something in the reduction of the number of special enlistments—that is, enlistment of men under the standard. The percentage of these to the total number of recruits, which was 30·6 in 1892, was reduced to 22·3 in the year just ended. As for the result of the recruiting, there are two passages in the Report of General Fielding which may be quoted with satisfaction. In paragraph 19 he said—

“It is gratifying to find that, in spite of the experiments made, in reference to the raising of the standards of age for the cavalry regiments serving in India, the standards of height for the Brigade of Guards and for the gunners and drivers of the Royal Artillery, and the restrictions on the enlistment of recruits under standard, the numbers of the rank and file were, on the 6th of September, the day previous to the departure of the first drafts for India, practically up to the number voted for the British establishment; in other words, the Army was as full as it could be.”

And in paragraph 27 he said—

“Although there were 6,464 fewer recruits passed into the Service in 1893 than in the previous year, the ranks were fuller by 1,580, men on the 1st of January, 1894, than they were on the same date in 1893. This, combined with the very large diminution in the proportion of men enlisted under standard, and the fact of the British establishments having been practically complete on the day of the departure of the first drafts for India, shows that the numbers of recruits obtained were sufficient for the purposes of the Army.”

These passages show that we owe a great deal to General Fielding's energy and activity. By his personal inspection of the recruiting centres, by his institution of lectures on the British Army, and by other methods he has given a great impetus to recruiting. One satisfactory incident deserves mention—namely, the march of a Welsh regiment through Wales. Not

only had the march a good effect on recruiting, but the regiment was received in a genial and kindly way by all classes of the community, and thus a feeling was aroused which is likely to be beneficial to the Army in the district. But the best advertisement of the Army, after all, is contentment on the part of the soldier; and we are doing all we can steadily and generally to increase that. There is some evidence that we have been successful in the fact that the discharges by purchase have considerably diminished, falling from 3,133 in 1892 to 2,617 last year. Of course, the state of trade is partly the cause of increase in enlistments and reduction in the number of discharges; but the figures are also a sign of increasing contentment. The Army Reserve has reached the figures of 80,849 men, having increased in two years by 12,000 men. As already stated, it is provided that each man is to receive three days' training or 12 drills, those who are brought out for that purpose being men in the tenth year of their service. By this time the Reserve will have been trained to the use of the Lee-Metford rifle. Another question occurs which is often asked in connection with the Reserves, and that is—Are they to be found when wanted? Here are some figures which I think ought to be satisfactory. The absentees are diminishing rapidly. In 1889 the percentage of absentees was 27; in 1890 it was 23; in 1891 it was 21; in 1892 it was 19; and last year it was 17, so that the Committee will see it is steadily diminishing. As to the health of the Army, most satisfactory reports come of it, showing that there is nothing to be apprehended on that score. The admissions to hospital and the death-rate remain about the same. A good deal has been done for the health of the soldiers of late years, and more particularly under the initiative of my friend Mr. Stanhope. The new barracks which have been provided in themselves would account for a great difference in the health of the soldiers, and I should like that hon. Members who take an interest in this subject should pay a visit to Aldershot, because I see within the range of my vision an hon. Member of the House who did go to Aldershot last year, and knowing Aldershot in the old days, and returning to it after a considerable

absence, he expressed himself as not only satisfied but astonished with all that had been done for the increased comfort of the soldier, and also at the evident effect of these changes upon the conduct and well-being of the soldier himself. Before I pass from the subject of the health of the Army let me say that a scheme for the practical training this summer of the Medical Staff and the Medical Staff Corps at Aldershot and the Curragh in the duties which they will have to perform in war has been elaborated and will be duly carried into effect. Much more is done for the soldier now than formerly, not only with regard to new barracks, but in developing better cooking and better management of canteens, which are being more carefully attended to, and with a very good double result. In the first place, there is a better quality of article for the soldier, and also there is a profit made which is expended for his advantage. On this subject I might mention that the new arrangement for the issue of clothing which I referred to last night, and which was recommended by Lord Wantage's Committee, we found was not capable of being applied until the 1st of January of this year, but since then it has been in operation. I mean the arrangement according to which personal clothing will become the soldier's property, and by which it is issued and renewed on the anniversary of his enlistment, and not as formerly at a fixed time of the year. Another step which I am glad to mention is that provision in these Estimates is made for a contribution of £500 towards the organisation in this country of the Army Temperance Association—an Institution which has been established in India and maintained with the zealous co-operation, among others, of Lord Roberts. In view of its marvellous effects in the Army in India in promoting temperate habits and more comfortable conditions of life among the soldiers, we have thought it right to exhibit by this grant our sympathy with the object, and our sense of the practical and tangible addition such a Society as this would make to the actual strength and real efficiency of the Army at home. Turning from the Army to the Militia the increased number enrolled on December 31, 1893, over the number enrolled on June 1, 1893, was 5,042. In the previous

year the increase was 6,256. In 1891 the increase was only 212, and in the two years previous to that there had been an actual falling off. This indicates a steady improvement and increase in the popularity of the Militia. The actual increase in the training was 7,096, and the total increase in the year would have been greater—and here I must cry *peccavi* to the Committee—but in the end of the year I found the Militia was increasing to such an extent, and the money available at my disposal was diminishing so rapidly, that I directed several checks to be put on recruiting for the Militia, which I thought, in the circumstances, were justified. We raised the standard to 64 inches for Infantry and to 66 inches for the Artillery, and we stopped the enlistment of growing lads between 17 and 18. I regretted having to do it, but the ranks being so full, fuller than they have ever been by 6,000 or 7,000 or 8,000 men, I thought, in the circumstances, with a very startling condition of the exchequer, that I was justified in putting a little check upon enlistment, but it has now been entirely taken off. Of the Yeomanry, all I can say is that the new organisation is being worked apparently with success and certainly with great loyalty by the officers. Turning to the Volunteers, I have to say that their increasing desire for efficiency is shown by the spirit in which they undergo the training, especially in camps, which they are now encouraged to undergo. The numbers have increased. Although the establishment has been lower by about 500 men, 2,000 more men have made themselves efficient. The deficiency in officers, which is so often referred to, remains almost at the identical figure it was last year. The number of Volunteers who received allowances for attending brigade camps in 1893—and I think these figures will be regarded as extremely satisfactory by the Committee—the number was 68,562. In 1892 it was 45,712, thus showing an increase of 22,850 men. One hundred and thirty-two battalions attended in 1893 as against 95 in 1892. In connection with brigade camps, I can state some facts which are well worth notice. The first brigade camp was held in 1889, but the system cannot be considered to have been in full working order until the

following year. From the time of the new musketry regulations for Volunteers in 1887 down to 1890 there had been a steady decrease in the efficient strength of the Volunteers. From 1890 until now there has been a steady increase. The Returns show that from 1887 to 1890 the Volunteer force lost 10,034 higher-grant efficient—that is to say, men who could shoot; and, on the other hand, it had in its ranks an increased number of 836 of the lower-grant efficient, whom I may describe as men who cannot shoot—at all events, not so well. But between 1890 and the end of 1893 the force has gained 8,319 higher-grant efficient and 1,022 lower-grant efficient, so that the improvement has been quite astonishing. Brigade camps have not been the only cause of this remarkable change, but they have, no doubt, had a good deal to do with it. In addition to the increase in the brigade camps, 7,486 Volunteers attended camps with Regulars in 1893, as against 4,986 in 1892. In the regimental camps, on the other hand, which are perhaps the least valuable form of camp, there was a falling-off in the numbers, there being 48,100 in 1893 as compared with 56,277 in 1892. These facts are most satisfactory, I think, as showing the healthy vitality of the Volunteer Force. It is intended, let me add, to adopt a new musketry course next year, which will have the effect of making the condition of efficiency higher than at present. I have a word or two to say now about the long-service decorations which were announced some months ago, and which Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to consent to confer upon non-commissioned officers. I much regret the delay that has occurred; but I have been most anxious to gather the views of experienced persons before taking any definite steps in the matter. I originally proposed that the decorations should be confined to non-commissioned officers, and that privates should not be eligible, as I thought at that time that there were good reasons for my taking that course. Since then, however, I have received a strong representation to the effect that there were many excellent, zealous, and efficient Volunteers of long standing, who, for some good reason, could not undertake the duties of a non-commissioned officer, but who had rendered most

useful and praiseworthy service in the ranks. I have been led to the conclusion that such men cannot fairly be denied this honourable distinction, and I propose, therefore, that it should be conferred on all men of good character, who, on or since January 1, 1893, have completed 20 years of efficient service as enrolled Volunteers. It has been impressed on me that it should be confined to men who have really rendered exceptional service, and I look very favourably on the idea; but I am obliged to regard it as being practically out of the question, because it has been found already, in the case of officers, that commanding officers will hardly take it upon themselves to refuse this honour to one of their corps who, although not very distinguished, was at least a deserving and well-conducted man. I have, therefore, been reluctantly obliged to abandon the idea. I propose to move for a Select Committee in the course of a few days to inquire into the working of the Volunteer Acts and the legal status and obligations of Volunteers. Coming to the question of materials, there is to be remarked a growing demand for two classes of stores—namely, tent equipment and barrack equipment; there being an increase under the one head of £15,490 and under the other of £44,970. For the last few years the number of soldiers trained in camps of instruction, and of Volunteers who go into camp, have been steadily increasing, and with a voluntary service such as ours, where soldiers undergo this most desirable training, money is well spent which adds to their comfort and secures their health. I should add that such exercises are not confined to places best known to the public, but small sums are allotted to our most distant Possessions in order that the garrisons may practise in peace the war duties for which they are maintained. The barrack stores, again, are necessary for the equipment of the new barracks at Aldershot and elsewhere. Among other improvements the issue of coir fibre bedding in place of straw bedding—a change greatly to the comfort of the soldier. The change necessitates an increased charge at first, although probably it will cause a considerable saving eventually to the Department. Regarding warlike stores, I would mention that a new 12-pounder gun equipment for

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Horse Artillery carrying 126 rounds per sub-division, against 108 as at present, has been adopted; the weight behind teams being 30 cwt., in place of 36 cwt. The pole draught has been approved for Field Artillery, and will be carried out gradually. A 15-pound shell will be shortly adopted for field batteries, in place of the 12½-pound projectile. The Lee-Metford rifle—of which, either in the hands of the troops or in stores, we have sufficient for all the Regulars and Militia—continues to be most favourably reported on. I may mention as a proof of the penetration of this rifle that experiments show that there is no safety behind a 9-inch brick wall up to a distance of 500 yards. With regard to cordite ammunition, as to the merits of which we had a long discussion in this House last Autumn, I am happy to be able to state that it continues to give universal satisfaction, and we see no reason whatever to doubt its stability under all circumstances. Small-arm ammunition in future will be made up entirely with the cordite. At present, for economical reasons, it is desirable that the ammunition already in store, made up with black powder, should be expended before the cordite ammunition is used for practice. In one or two districts cordite is used in order that any defects may be brought to light; but up to the present time no complaints of any consequence have been made. Field gun cartridges will in future be filled with cordite, the existing stock of black powder cartridges being used up as in the previous case, so long as they remain in stock. Light field ammunition for all guns up to 6-inch inclusive will be made up with cordite patterns, for this class of ammunition has been already determined on, and charges for heavy guns are being worked out for new guns. This is not such a difficult problem, as the chamber, rifling, and other equipments can be modified to meet the altered conditions. But there is more difficulty with the old guns, and considerable alteration may have to be made in many of them. As to erosion, in the smaller natures of guns—i.e., up to 6 inches—it has not been found excessive or appreciably greater than with black powder. In the rifle the wear (not erosion) is considerably greater than with black powder, being due to the absence of fouling and the consequent

unchecked friction between the hard envelope of the bullet and the barrel. We are in hopes that this may be reduced by suitable means as we get to know more exactly all the causes to which erosion may be due; but it must be remembered that with cordite a muzzle velocity is obtained much greater than with black powder, and in any case the rifle can fire effectively between 4,000 and 5,000 rounds before the shooting is seriously affected, and this is calculated as equal to the life of the rifle from other causes. I think that is not an unsatisfactory account of our experience at the War Office of cordite. This brings me to the question of the administration of the factories; and the principal event, of course, in regard to them is the alteration of the hours of labour, which, so far as it has gone, has been met by the men employed in a spirit of alacrity and faithfulness which promises the best results. We, and the officers immediately in connection with the Department, are confident there will be no loss to the public from the adoption of the shorter hours. In undertaking to make this change we were greatly indebted to the Member for Gorton and the Member for Gateshead for their admirable advice and the relation of their experience. Since that change has been in operation I can state confidently to the Committee now that there has been no loss to the public. At first, of course, there may be a little inconvenience in adapting ourselves to the new conditions, but the Superintendents and the Director General have no complaints, so far as I have heard, from the men. In speaking of this matter it is only right that I should pay a well-deserved tribute to the Superintendents and to the Director General of the Factories, Dr. Anderson, in reference to the changes they have introduced. Dr. Anderson, as the Committee knows, is a man of the highest scientific attainments, and of great business capacity, and he is also able to maintain the best relations with the workmen under his charge. Short hours have also been introduced at the Clothing Factory under the auspices of the new Director of Clothing. Waltham has been made an exception. The conditions of labour there are so exceptional that it is impos-

sible to deal with that establishment in the same way as we have dealt with the others. I expect in a short time to have the Report of the Committee appointed to ascertain whether proper precautions are taken against accidents, and especially into the cause of the recent melancholy explosion there. That Committee includes Lord Sandhurst (chairman), Sir Frederick Abel, and Colonel Majendie. We have thought it desirable, by very wide terms of Reference, to make that inquiry a thorough one in order to ensure the adoption of all reasonable precautions in the factories and for the safety of surrounding buildings. Turning to the Works Vote, I can say that it has been limited to the most modest demands that can be made. Under the head of Fortifications we provide for commencing or continuing certain new works at important strategic points, for the improvement of artillery ranges, and the maintenance and adaptation—always a large cost of existing works. Three large and important ordnance store establishments—at Dover, Burscough, near Liverpool, and Stirling, will be completed, which will not only make the store arrangements more satisfactory for the respective districts, but will promote economy and efficiency in the better preservation of stores and centralisation of charge. The buildings necessary at Barry Links will be got on with. For barracks the sum devoted to maintenance is large, and our policy has been to keep it large. I do not think money can be better spent than in the proper maintenance of existing barracks; and not only is this a good policy, but we are obliged to spend more because the new barracks have many more rooms and accessories, and in every respect necessitate a larger outlay than the older type of barracks. The work under the Barracks Act is progressing satisfactorily. The cost of building has risen since the Act was passed, and, in consequence, some stations and services which were originally included have been struck out of the scheme, but not to a very great extent.

MR. BRODRICK: What money have you spent?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not know exactly. Then, as to rifle ranges, these have been improved

or extended at various places during 1893, so as to meet the requirements, in this respect, of the '303 rifle. The most prominent of the ranges thus improved are:—Home stations: Barry Links (Scotland), Landguard (Harwich), Brown-down (Gosport), and Aldershot.

MR. BRODRICK: What about Ireland?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There is great difficulty in obtaining a range for the Dublin district, but I cannot tell the right hon. Gentleman precisely how that matter stands. Under the Imperial Defence Act, £350,000 was obtained for building barracks to accommodate the increase of the coaling station garrisons. As far as it would go, works were undertaken and have been completed at Sierra Leone, the Cape, Ceylon, and the Mauritius, or will be shortly completed. At Jamaica and St. Lucia the work will be completed in a few months' time, and at Hong Kong in about a year's time. There is but one remaining subject to which I shall seek to direct the attention of the Committee, and that is the education of officers. With us, even in greater degree than in other countries, there is demanded of our officers, on account of the varied service of our Army, a high standard of professional knowledge and accomplishment; and while I am anxious to raise that standard, I have a strong desire to secure that no undue advantage should be derived from wealth or social station. Brain and nerve are what we require, and we should attract and encourage them by appointing their possessors, in whomsoever they are found. I hold it, therefore, to be of great importance to check extravagance of living, and to see that proper opportunities of instruction are afforded, and that examinations and appointments are such as to give a fair chance to all. The question of the entrance examination I have referred to a Committee, which will soon present its Report; and I have to express my obligation to several Members of the House who have served upon it. The Reports of the Visitors upon the Royal Military Academy and the Royal Military College have been carefully considered, and their principal recommendations have been adopted—some of them, in fact, had been determined upon before

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the inquiry took place. One great purpose of all these changes is to diminish the causes of expense to cadets. I need not give details, but the Committee will understand that as much as possible is being done in that direction. The Artillery College, graduates from which are eligible for appointments in the manufacturing departments, has been, as I promised last year, opened to other than Artillery officers, and though the number competing this year is not large on account of the short notice, it is hoped when this is known that a considerable number will compete. I have now presented to the Committee the present condition of the Army. I began by stating that I had no startling circumstances or intentions to disclose. The Committee will, however, agree with me that the gradual development and improvement in all branches of the Service is, on the whole, eminently satisfactory. It represents much patient, but earnest, labour, much self-sacrifice, much intelligent effort on the part of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, and all that I have had to state proves at least that our military forces fully deserve the confidence and the gratitude of the country for whose service they are maintained.

MR. BRODRICK said, the very kind allusion made by the right hon. Gentleman to the late Mr. Stanhope, who lately occupied his position, was, he felt sure, fully endorsed by the Committee, whose sympathetic cheers could not furnish a greater tribute to the work done by his late right hon. Friend than the speech just delivered and the evidence afforded by the right hon. Gentleman in continuing his policy that he appreciated that work. The right hon. Gentleman had adopted many of the features of the administration of his predecessors, some of which had not always been received with general consent by the House at the time they were first initiated. The right hon. Gentleman had certainly had considerable experience in carrying out reforms in Army administration; and though the Estimates showed an increase of £278,000, it was a gratification to find that in no quarter of the Committee had that increase been challenged. He did not think that after the speech of the Secretary of State his friends on that side of the House would consider

there was anything in these Estimates which was not judicious and which was not indeed absolutely necessary, and the Committee should congratulate the right hon. Gentleman upon his courage in increasing his Estimates in a year which had not by any means produced a financial plethora. Three or four years ago the Secretary of State expressed in a speech he then delivered considerable doubt whether the number of men we maintained was absolutely necessary; but this year he had added 900 men to the regimental establishments, most of them to strengthen our force in Egypt at a special time. He approved of the increase of 900 men, which, no doubt, would be appreciated by the Member for Northampton, who was followed into the Lobby by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary in support of a Motion for the evacuation of Egypt. [MR. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear.] He had no doubt they would now have the support of the hon. Member. [MR. LABOUCHERE: No, no.] Well, he had hoped that they would have had it on this occasion. But they might take credit for this: During several years strong representations were made to the War Office; the Committee which had been appointed to investigate the matter had reported, and in almost every instance their Report had been acted upon, while economy had been practised wherever it was possible. It was most satisfactory that they had these proposals from the most Radical Government of modern times for increasing the numbers of men, horses, and arms in a year which was not too prosperous. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had told the Committee nothing about the new magazine rifle, with which they had hoped we should be able to meet any foe. Every regiment of the Line, he believed, had it, but very few of the Militia regiments; and unfortunately they were given to understand that, instead of the military carbine being adapted to the .303 bore, as was done in the case of the rifles, at a very moderate cost, the course had been adopted of simply cutting down the Martini-Henry carbine and so maintaining for a considerable time two kinds of ammunition. He noticed that there was a considerable reduction in the supply of small-arm ammunition compared with

previous years, and he would be glad to receive an assurance from the Secretary of State that he was satisfied with the present reserve, which seemed very small, being only about 4,000,000 rounds. He also hoped that the annual maintenance had been maintained without any poaching on former reserves. There was always a great temptation to poach upon reserves when large reductions were made. The late Secretary of State proposed to do that without tapping the reserves, but no such assurance had now been given by the right hon. Gentleman either in this or in other respects. The Committee would allow him, in conclusion, to congratulate the Secretary of State upon the satisfactory statement which he had laid before the Committee, and he hoped they would not grudge either the small increase in the number of men or the considerable and inevitable increase in the Estimates.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD asked for an assurance from the right hon. Gentleman that there was sufficient clothing in store in case of immediate mobilisation; and also desired to know whether the houses for the reception of stores, which he had mentioned in his speech, were really ready and properly equipped? The right hon. Gentleman said he was doing everything in his power to cut down the cadets' expenses, and upon the subject of expenditure he would refer to the dearth of cavalry officers. The number of cavalry officers was barely equal to the requirements of the Service, on account of the enormous expenses which they had to incur in addition to their pay. There were very few parents who in these days could pay what practically amounted to a fine of £500 a year for the privilege of keeping their sons in cavalry regiments, and he was of opinion that the whole tenour of life in those regiments would have to be changed if they were to obtain and keep a proper supply of cavalry officers. It was difficult to point to particular items of expenditure, but his broad premiss was that so long as cavalry officers were allowed or compelled to spend £500 or £600 a year while their pay was but £100, the supply would be short.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, that extra expenses for cavalry officers, like the cost of saddles and everything

else, were an inevitable accompaniment of the Service. But there were much more important subjects of comment. The Secretary of State had said he had no startling announcements or disclosures to make. They had, however, made one startling discovery from his speech. From what they had been given to understand there was not sufficient machinery in case of war for the manufacture of small-arm ammunition, and this point, he thought, required very careful consideration. The Secretary of State said positively that the factories had been working up to their full power and only got annual maintenance. Again, the Secretary of State was very reticent on the subject of magazine rifles. He saw by the papers that the War Department were giving up the manufacture of magazine rifles, and that they considered there were sufficient of them at the present time. He believed the number of rifles was absolutely insignificant for a great country. When he asked a question on this subject the only answer he got was that there were enough for the Regular Army, the Militia, and the Reserve. In foreign countries two rifles were allowed to every man in the active Army; but, allowing a 20 per cent. reserve, we had barely a reasonable supply for the Regular Army and the Militia. This was a matter of the most vital consequence. It was allowed that Napoleon in 1814 failed quite as much for want of muskets as for want of men, and it was a very common thing indeed for a country to find itself hampered for the want of arms. It was the position of the Confederate Army at the close of the war. In this country there was absolutely no reserve for arming the younger men who would be called in. The Volunteers were to have the Martini-Henry, while everybody on the Continent had 3-bore rifles and the fast bullet, and with this difference in their arms, whenever the Volunteers came into the field, 5,000 of them would only be as good as 3,000 of the enemy, merely on the question of the rifle, and leaving everything else out of consideration. They were leaving the Army with a very small number of odd rifles, and if the country was by any possibility invaded they would not have proper arms to arm them with, and the men would be demoralised through

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having inferior arms. There were several possible reasons for this state of things. The authorities might be experimenting with a still better rifle. With the bore reduced to .20 they could get a better rifle, but nobody would pledge their word to .20, though they would to .25. He thought they were putting themselves into a very serious difficulty by stopping the manufacture of rifles when every other country was going in for having 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 of these small-bore rifles. The number of rifles in the country was a matter of first-class consequence. England had been generally considered as a very hard shell with a soft inside, and they were making the shell very much softer by not having a sufficient number of rifles in the country to arm the population.

SIR A. HAYTER (Walsall) said, he was anxious to add his congratulations to the Secretary of State for War on his able speech, and on the satisfactory conditions which enabled him to make that speech. It seemed to him the golden age of the Army. We had an increase in the number of recruits, the ranks were full, and everything seemed to be going on in a flourishing condition. As the conditions in regard to the men were so satisfactory, the small increase that there was in the Estimates was very easily accounted for. The right hon. Gentleman, however, rather failed to explain a point which he said in his speech last year was of the utmost and most vital importance for the better organisation of the Army. He understood from him that of all the recommendations of the Wantage Commission all the points on which the Army could be improved in its organisation none could equal that of equalising the battalions at home and abroad, and calling home a sufficient number of battalions to make the efficiency of those at home compare favourably with those abroad. The right hon. Gentleman had alluded to four different modes by which this equalisation might be carried out. By the Memorandum issued with the Army Estimates he saw that one of those had fallen through. Owing to circumstances over which he had no control, it was impossible to reduce the strength of the garrison in Egypt. But there was, in addition to that, a proposal that one of

the battalions might be withdrawn from the garrison at Gibraltar. They had there 5,700 men, and it appeared to him to be not only very large for the necessities of the garrison, but they could be very easily replaced in case of emergency. Then, the right hon. Gentleman had said he would put himself into communication with the Indian Government, and see whether they, too, would agree to withdraw one of the battalions from India, provided they had increased establishments to make up for the withdrawal. There was one other proposal, which was to replace a battalion of the Line to act in Egypt with a battalion of Guards. The battalion of Guards going out, of course, would not be included in the territorial arrangements, and by withdrawing another battalion in Egypt they would benefit the equalisation of battalions. He did not know whether the Secretary for War still entertained that proposal. There was no point in these Estimates which he regarded with greater satisfaction than the initial step which had been taken of drilling the Reserves. For 10 years he had been urging this upon the attention of the War Office, and he was quite certain that if what he had done with a very small portion of the Reserves were adopted all through the Reserves they would have a more satisfactory arrangement. The Reserves now swelled to 80,000 men, and he understood that only a very small proportion of them were to be drilled at all, but still it was a step in the right direction. These men received 6d. a day, and some of them had only done three years' service in the ranks, and had been receiving their 6d. a day for doing absolutely nothing. Lord Wolseley, he believed, said these men would be absolutely required in case of invasion, and it had been shown conclusively by the Member for Oxford that they would be called upon to go abroad; and he maintained that it was absolutely impossible to regard these men as an efficient Reserve to send abroad unless some steps were taken to find out whether they were in existence, and to have them regularly drilled. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take courage and would increase the number of Reserves. He was extremely glad to see that since the new commandant arrived at Sandhurst

there had been great and important changes made. He was sure everyone interested in the education of young officers would be glad to know that one hour a day had been added to the small modicum of training which they had. In the entrance examination for the Army there were no fewer than 2,000 marks given for French and German. That was a very excellent thing, because there could be no doubt that it was most important that officers should be able to speak those languages, but he regretted that additional marks were not given for other languages.

SIR S. NORTHCOTE (Exeter) thought it would be a great satisfaction to the Committee if the right hon. Gentleman were able to say whether the reserve stores of guns, ammunition, rifles, and clothing were not being drawn upon unduly, and if the reserve were being maintained in somewhat the same condition, or in even better condition, than when he acceded to Office. If for any reason the War Office were anxious to effect economy, one of the easiest ways to do so would be to draw upon the reserve they found existing when they came into Office. He ventured to suggest whether it might not be possible in future Statements by the Secretary of State to say whether it would be found desirable either to augment or to reduce such stores.

*MR. WOODALL said, the question of from time to time making Returns of the actual state of the stores in hand had been very seriously considered. But no one knew better than the hon. Baronet who had just spoken how much inconvenience such a practice would involve. The Government was confident that no such proposals as he apprehended for depleting stores could be resorted to by anyone worthy of the confidence of that House. With regard to the question of uniformity in the bore of small arms, that was an important consideration, but the authorities had not yet come to a definite conclusion on the matter. But, at any rate, the Martini-Henry rifle, which was still in the hands of Volunteers and of a considerable number of our troops, and the machine guns which were in the different garrisons and ports throughout the country had the same bore, '45. But they were steadily bringing into the Service

the new Lee-Metford with its smaller bore, '303. Attention had been called to the importance of having a sufficient number of the new weapons for all possible services liable to be requisitioned. It would be highly inconvenient to give the precise figure, but he had before him the total number of Regular troops at home, abroad, and reserve, and he had also a statement of the number of Lee-Metford rifles in the hands of the troops at home and abroad and in store. He could assure the Committee that there was a satisfactory margin in regard to any possible reserve that might be called upon in the emergencies of actual service. They were also considering various proposals for adopting the Martini-Henry so as to carry the '303 ammunition, and they were sanguine of success. The cost would depend upon the pattern. He could not give details, because he did not know the exact process to be followed, but it would be an economical one, and a novel and ingenious one. The Committee, no doubt, would desire to know how far the War Office were ensuring for the service of the country a sufficient store of Service ammunition. The subject was one which from time to time caused a great deal of concern to those who were charged with the administration of the War Department. With every change of ammunition they seemed to come to a sort of ebb. The trade, upon which the War Office had to rely to a considerable extent, was tardy in coming forward with the new service, and they had to rely on their own Government factories; but when the trade did accommodate itself to their wants the capacity of the supply was enormous, and it was difficult to find orders to satisfy it. This was the case with cordite, which was satisfying the general requirements not merely of the small-arm ammunition, but of the large and quick-firing guns.

MR. BRODRICK: Why, under these circumstances, has the amount been reduced since last year?

*MR. WOODALL: They were using up their store of ammunition which would shortly become obsolete, but they were not able to obtain anything like the quantity of cordite for which they had a demand. They were steadily increasing their production at Waltham, and from 400 tons

they hoped to increase it up to 600, and they were now assured that under pressure the quantity could be increased to more than 800 tons a year from their own factories. Of course, they had had to await the decision of the Law Courts, which they had desired to regard in the light of a friendly arbitration, and although he could not say what might be the future course of litigation, it was permissible for him to hope that the present result would be to bring the private trader to their relief, so that they could put into practical use the large quantity of cordite required.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he wanted to say one word in apology and answer to his hon. and gallant Friend opposite. He had omitted to answer his question as to the mobilisation of the Reserve and the clothing dépôt in Pimlico. He himself had little doubt that the dépôt at Pimlico could clothe the Reserve men in ample time for the mobilisation. Having considered the matter very closely he did not think that what was called the centralisation at Pimlico was as serious a matter as was sometimes supposed.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD wished to know whether there was enough clothing now?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The Report I receive is that there is enough clothing for the Reserve. As to the question put by my hon. Friend, the proposal to send a battalion of the Guards to Egypt was only part of the scheme for equalising the battalions. If I had seen my way to any scheme for accomplishing that result the battalion of the Guards would have gone to Egypt; but when that became hopeless, there was no need to depart from the ordinary practice.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) pointed out that nothing had been done to improve the ranges in Lancashire, and said it was a question not merely of providing fresh ranges but of making the existing ones accessible.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton), having congratulated the Secretary for War upon his administrative ability and upon the lucidity of the explanation he had given, said the increase of the Army by 905 was stated to be in great part due to the requirements of Egypt.

It appeared that there were more British soldiers there now than there were a year or two since.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There are not more than there were last year at this time; but the Estimates of last year were framed before the despatch of these men, and therefore the presence of the men in Egypt was not indicated in them.

MR. LABOUCHERE said that, at all events, there were more men in Egypt now than there were during the whole of the period in which the Conservative Government was in Office. It had been pointed out that during the Conservative Administration he (Mr. Labouchere) moved the reduction of the Army by the total number of soldiers who were in Egypt. When he did that it was to show that he wanted the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt, and almost every gentleman now on the Treasury Bench went into the Lobby with him. If he remembered rightly, the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) not only voted but spoke in favour of his proposition. He was not astonished, under the circumstances, that the Liberal Party were sometimes charged with being more factious than patriotic, and he was bound to admit that the charge almost seemed true when the Liberal Party, after having voted for the reduction of the Army by the number of men who were in Egypt, increased the number of soldiers in that country almost as soon as they came into Office. Last year a particular reason was given for the increase. Something or other had happened in Egypt, and, with that respectful deference which he always showed for his Leaders, he refrained from moving any Resolution. He said to himself, however, that on the following year he should have the pleasure of thinking that his Leaders remembered the Resolution he moved, and they supported, two or three years ago, and he expected an announcement in the Queen's Speech that they contemplated at once withdrawing from Egypt. He had not given notice to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) that he intended to bring the matter forward, and, therefore, he thought it hardly fair to bring it forward except in a cursory manner, all

the more as he would probably find several opportunities during the Session of treating it in detail. The hon. Gentleman opposite had challenged him to say whether he was as faithless to his opinions as the Government were. He did not accept that mode of putting it; but he felt bound to say that, as far as he was concerned, men might come and men might go on the Treasury Bench; but he stood to his opinions, and he should be ashamed of himself if he were to alter them merely because this man or that man, or this Party or that Party, occupied the Treasury Bench. He had always been opposed to the occupation of Egypt, and his right hon. Friend who had just entered the House (Mr. J. Morley) had always been with him. He remembered some excellent remarks his right hon. Friend made in Newcastle. They delighted his heart at the time. He said to himself, "I shall always have my right hon. Friend with me in this matter of Egypt." But, alas! he was afraid he had lost his right hon. Friend's support in this matter, for he was one of the Ministers who were asking, not that we should diminish our force in Egypt, but that we should increase it by 905 men. He had intended to move the reduction of the Vote by the 905 men as a protest against the occupation of Egypt, but the hour was very late, and he thought he should be able to make the protest on a better occasion. One reason for objecting to the increase was that the Navy was about to be enormously increased. His right hon. Friend the Secretary for War had pointed out that, as a necessary consequence of increasing the Navy, they must increase the Army, as there would be more coaling stations and harbours to protect abroad. He (Mr. Labouchere) wanted the Committee to remember that for every ship by which the Navy was increased soldiers would have to be found to defend the ports it would have to enter. This was a very serious matter, considering the enormous burdens under which they were groaning owing to the vastly increased expenditure on the Army and Navy.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My hon. Friend has misapprehended what I said. I pointed out that to a certain extent an increase had occurred, but it does not always follow that an

increase in the Army will follow an increase in the Navy. I thank my hon. Friend for his leniency in sparing us in this Army Debate a discussion on the affairs of Egypt. As I understand, my hon. Friend wishes to point out our misconduct, or at all events our strange conduct, in having followed him into the Lobby some two years ago on the question of Egypt, and in now showing a disposition to adopt another policy. I have noticed that there are occasions on which hon. Members follow my hon. Friend into the Lobby, and afterwards rather regret having done so. We are, therefore, not altogether singular if that is the state of mind in which we find ourselves. As far as I am personally concerned, I am not sure that I did follow my hon. Friend, and I certainly never shared his views on the general question of Egypt. The fact of a small addition being made to the troops in Egypt does not alter in the least the policy of the Government in regard to that country. I rose, however, really for the purpose of thanking my hon. Friend for his kindness and leniency in letting us off so easily, and I hope we may now be allowed to take the Vote.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked whether it was intended to convert a large number of Martini-Henry rifles into the 3-10ths bore weapons?

*MR. WOODALL said, experiments were being made, and he thought it very likely indeed that they would result in having a very useful weapon made out of the existing Martini-Henry. He was not in a position to say how many would be converted. If the operation was successful there was no reason why it should not be carried out on a large scale.

COLONEL NOLAN: By the hundred thousand?

MR. WOODALL: I am not in a position to say.

*SIR F. FITZWYGRAM (South Hants, Fareham) wished to bring under the notice of the House a very great injustice that was done to the large and most valuable body of officers who had commanded regiments by the almost total reservation of all Staff appointments to those who had passed the Staff College. He knew that some former commanders had been admitted to such appointments, but the number was so small that it scarcely affected the question. He did

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not wish to say a word against the Staff College, but merely to protest against the system of excluding former regimental commanding officers from Staff appointments. Those who had commanded regiments formed a most valuable body. The position of a regimental commander required a great deal of tact, training, and nerve, and it should be the object of the Secretary for War to give the utmost encouragement to good commanders. There were 250 battalions, and, such as the commanding officers were, such would be the battalions, and, such as the battalions, such would be the Army. If the regiments were good, as they would be if their commanding officers were good, we should have success in war, although we had a very untrained Staff. Regiments had been known to fight out a battle to a successful issue in spite of mistakes made by the Generals. If, however, our regiments were not properly trained, the best Generals in the world would not prevent us having reverses. As matters stood at present, a Colonel might do the best he possibly could and might turn a bad regiment into a good one, but there was no reward and no future for him. He wished to ask the Secretary for War if he would re-consider the request made to him a short time ago with regard to Chelsea Hospital pensions? It was not a good thing for the Army that about 80,000 men should go about saying that they had been deprived of their just rights. All he wanted was a Select Committee or a small Commission to inquire into the claims that were put forward.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked whether there would be an opportunity on a future Vote of discussing general questions relating to the Army?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes, Sir; it is quite understood that there will be a discussion on the next occasion when the Army Estimates are taken.

Question put, and agreed to.

2. £5,981,000, Pay, &c. of the Army (General Staff, Regiments, Reserve, and Departments), agreed to.

3. £100, Ordnance Factories.

COLONEL NOLAN: What is the meaning of this Vote? Why do you take such an absurd sum as £100?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It seems absurd to ask for £100, but it has been the practice to have such a Vote in order to bring the operations of the Ordnance Factory within the cognisance of the House of Commons. It is merely to show the way in which the money voted on the Army Estimates is expended at the Ordnance Factories.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, the Vote very much interested his constituents. There were two small arms factories, one being at Enfield and the other at Sparkbrook. In the current year the Wages Vote for Enfield had been reduced only 25 per cent., while that for Sparkbrook had been reduced no less than 42 per cent. The amount was formerly £60,000 for Sparkbrook, but during the current year it had been reduced to £35,000. When the Estimates for 1894-5 were issued it was seen that the £35,000 had been practically reduced to £14,000, for although the amount stood at £36,000 a sum of £22,000 was to be expended in repairing the shops. The proposed reduction amounted to a practical extinction of the small arms factory at Sparkbrook, which was described as one of the best equipped factories in the world. In the interests of the Public Service his hon. Friends and himself thought it inadvisable to practically destroy a factory of that kind. They were therefore glad to find that the Secretary for War had somewhat modified the Estimates by consenting to produce at Sparkbrook the rifles that would be required for the Navy during the coming year. They thanked him very much for this concession, which would, of course, keep the factory going during the coming year. At Enfield, so far from there having been any reduction, the wages bill had been increased by £78,000, making a total for the coming year of £198,000. He thought he would best consult the convenience of the Committee if he did not on that occasion deal with the general question as between Sparkbrook and Enfield, especially as there would be an opportunity of going

into the question at a later period of the Session. Hon. Members must, however, know that a factory placed in the centre of the Kingdom in the midst of an unlimited supply of men and material of the very best quality and at a place where the railway facilities to all parts of the country were excellent was in the best possible place. Sparkbrook was, undoubtedly, the best place, especially in the case of emergency. He was aware that Enfield was the pet so far as official influence was concerned, and it was time that the question should be brought before the House as a practical one, so that that official influence might not be allowed much longer to spend such enormous sums year after year on what could only be termed an exotic. They had never raised any question about Enfield until they were in a measure challenged by the extraordinary way in which it had become the pet not of successive Governments, but, he believed, of the officials connected with this branch of the Public Service. He would therefore conclude with again thanking his right hon. Friend for the kind manner in which he had received the representations placed before him, and for having gone so far, at any rate, as to allow this factory to be continued as a going concern instead of being dismantled and being practically reduced to a position of uselessness.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Perhaps I may be allowed to intervene for a short time. The Vote raises, or might raise, a question of the very greatest importance, which I hope may some time be brought to the attention of the Committee, and that is the continual growth of Government establishments for the manufacture of arms. That is not a question as between two rival Government establishments, but as between Government establishments and private firms. Now, I entertain the opinion which, I believe, was entertained by those who originally created the Government establishments at Enfield, that such a manufactory ought to be in the nature of an experimental factory, that it ought to be created and maintained for the purpose of making experiments, for the purpose of testing inventions, and for the purpose of controlling prices, so that prices might not be left entirely to what might

become a ring of private manufacturers to the disadvantage of the public. But it is not in accordance with the original idea under which the factories were created, and it is not in the public interest that they should have grown to their present enormous extent. The effect of creating great Government establishments of the kind is to discourage private manufacturers, and in a great war it is upon private manufacturers that you have to depend. You will then find that they have been very largely discouraged and prevented from taking their proper rank, owing to the growth of these Government establishments. That matter, however, must be postponed to another occasion. To-night the only question raised is the question of the way in which the Government has dealt with the two Government establishments at Birmingham and at Enfield. I am quite certain that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War has regarded this matter with absolute impartiality, and that it is his desire and intention to do perfect justice as between the two establishments, but neither my right hon. Friend nor any Secretary of State is absolutely his own master in a matter of this kind. He has to deal with an old official vested interest which has grown up at Enfield, and which is, I am afraid, too strong for almost any temporary head of the War Department. I think that that is proved by the way in which the Estimates are prepared on the present occasion. The very fact that the moment these Estimates were brought to the knowledge of my right hon. Friend he endeavoured to make some kind of satisfactory arrangement shows that he himself must have been astonished by the Estimates which were prepared for him by his official advisers. What is the state of the case? Here at a time when the Government thought themselves unable to continue the manufacture of arms, and when accordingly they withdrew all their orders from the two Government establishments, we actually find one of those establishments—the greater, the more powerful, the one with the more established vested interest—is able to come to Parliament actually with an increase of £78,000 upon its wages, whereas there is a reduction of something like 60 per cent. in the

wages of the other factory. As I say, the contrast has been to a considerable extent redressed by the action of the Secretary of State, and it would be ungracious in us not to accept very gratefully his intervention in the matter. There is only one other question I want to put, and that is, whether, under these circumstances—which involve the continuous employment of, as I understand, at any rate the greater part of the Sparkbrook establishment at full time during the year—it is desirable to proceed with the intention announced by my right hon. Friend of dismantling a portion of the machinery at Sparkbrook in order to make room for the manufacturing establishment at Bagot Street. I believe that if this proceeding is carried out there will be a very serious additional and unnecessary expenditure involved, because what will happen will be this: The machinery will be dismantled at a great cost, and if, hereafter, there be a demand for that machinery, it will have to be replaced, also at great cost. I am convinced that the cost of dismantling it and replacing it would more than pay for an addition in the shape of temporary or other sheds which might be added to the existing establishment at Sparkbrook. The only cost would be the building of a shed, which would not, I am convinced, cost more than the expense of removing and again replacing the machinery. I still hope that my right hon. Friend, in view of the altered circumstances, may be willing to reconsider or even to postpone his determination; but whatever is decided, I desire to thank him for his reconsideration of the Vote on the present occasion.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, who was indistinctly heard, said: I am much obliged to my right hon. Friend and to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bordesley for the kindly way in which they have spoken of my action in this matter. I have done no more than my duty in listening carefully to and inquiring most minutely into the view of the question which they have put so moderately and so reasonably before me. With regard to the question of maintaining Bagot Street, or transferring it, as my right hon. Friend has just suggested, to some temporary building, leaving the Sparkbrook factory intact,

I have looked carefully into the matter, and the conclusion I am driven to is that there would be great economy and great increased efficiency in having a repairing establishment, under the same management as Sparkbrook, and, therefore, it is proposed to discontinue Bagot Street. There would be great additional expense in the erection of additional buildings to Sparkbrook, and I am informed by those who have gone carefully into the matter that the removal of the machinery would not be so costly as my right hon. Friend seems to anticipate. Into the general question regarding the rivalry of Enfield and Birmingham I am not disposed to enter at present. I have, on more than one occasion, expressed my views on that subject. I can assure my right hon. Friend that there is with us no favouritism for one over the other; on the contrary, we are most anxious to encourage the manufacture of rifles in that which is the natural seat of manufacture—namely, Birmingham; and as a proof of our desire to do that, I may say that we have just made an arrangement which will practically imply a considerable extension of orders from the private trade in Birmingham for another year than that which is immediately before us. My right hon. Friends have pointed out that the Estimate as it stands shows a great increase at Enfield and a diminution at Sparkbrook for the coming year. But the Estimate is arranged on the understanding that the two factories are to be worked as parts of our Government establishment, and, therefore, there will be no difficulty in removing from one to the other any part of the work, and, accordingly, within the last two or three days I have been able to arrange that an order for new rifles, which we expect to receive from the Admiralty within a short time, shall be transferred to the Sparkbrook account from the Enfield account, and that will keep the establishment going. I have tried to meet the reasonable anxiety of my right hon. Friends in this matter, and I hope that, after all, there may not be so much, as they imagine there is, of a desire on the part of the officials of the Department to favour Enfield. It must be remembered that at Enfield the machinery is capable of manu-

facturing a large number of weapons of different kinds which are not manufactured at Sparkbrook. The machinery at Sparkbrook is applicable to the manufacture of the Lee-Metford rifle, but Maxim guns and machine guns and a large number of weapons of different descriptions cannot be manufactured there at all. I am very glad, however, that my right hon. Friends are so far satisfied, and I can only say that we have done no more than our duty in making the arrangements we have made.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. Friend has made a statement which is of very great interest to the private trade. Can he give us any further information as to that matter? Are orders to be given which will employ the private trade next year as well as the present year?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I mentioned it to show the desire we have to encourage and keep going the private trade in Birmingham.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: If prices are satisfactory to my right hon. Friend there will be work to give employment for another year?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS said, that in previous years orders had been given at Birmingham for Maxim guns and other kinds, which he believed were executed in a satisfactory manner and at somewhat lower prices than elsewhere.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, some of his hon. Friends desired to raise certain questions in regard to eight hours, wages, and other matters, and he wanted to know whether the Chairman would consider such discussion allowable on the Stores Vote proposed to be taken in April or May?

*THE CHAIRMAN was understood to reply in the affirmative.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [15th March] reported, and agreed to.—[See page 351.]

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(in the Committee.)

1. Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1894, the sum of £577,222 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895, the sum of £5,981,100 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred all Petitions presented to the House, with the exception of such as relate to Private Bills; and that such Committee do classify and prepare abstracts of the same, in such form and manner as shall appear to them best suited to convey to the House all requisite information respecting their contents, and do report the same from time to time to the House; and that the Reports of the Committee do set forth the number of signatures to each Petition only in respect to those signatures to which addresses are affixed:—And that such Committee have power to direct the printing *in extenso* of such Petitions, or of such parts of Petitions, as shall appear to require it:—And that such Committee have power to Report their opinion and observations thereupon to the House:

The Committee was accordingly nominated of:—Mr. Benn, Mr. Biddulph, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Byles, Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, Mr. Crombie, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Leake, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Mr. Mulholland, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Tollemache, and Mr. Henry J. Wilson.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Sir Charles Dalrymple.*)

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

First Report, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 34.]

CIVIL SERVICES (EXCESSES), 1892-3.

Copy presented,—of Statement of Sums required to be Voted in order to make good Excesses on certain Grants for Civil Services for the year ended 31st March 1893 [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 30.]

House adjourned at One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 19th March 1894.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER
CONFIRMATION BILLS.THE CHAIRMAN OF COM-
MITTEES (The Earl of MORLEY)
moved—

"That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Tuesday the 26th day of June next :

"That no Bill originating in this House confirming any Provisional Order in pursuance of a Report of the Board of Agriculture relating to the enclosure or regulation of a common, or confirming any scheme certified by the said Board relating to a Metropolitan common, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a first time after Thursday the 10th day of May next :

"That no Bill originating in this House confirming any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate shall be read a first time after Thursday the 10th day of May next :

"That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any Provisional Order in pursuance of a Report of the Board of Agriculture relating to the enclosure or regulation of a common, or confirming any scheme certified by the said Board relating to a Metropolitan common, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a second time after Tuesday the 26th day of June next :

"That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate shall be read a second time after Tuesday the 26th day of June next :

"That when a Bill shall have passed this House with Amendments these Orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended :

"That this House will not receive any Petition for a Private Bill after Tuesday the 1st day of May next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice ; nor any Petition for a Private Bill approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice after Thursday the 10th day of May next :

"That this House will not receive any Report from the Judges upon Petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after Thursday the 10th day of May next."

Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That the said Orders be printed and published, and affixed to the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 7.)

VOL. XXII. [FOURTH SERIES.]

COPYHOLD (CONSOLIDATION) BILL
[H.L.].—(No. 2.)Read 2^a (according to Order).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered on Monday next, in order to its being dispensed with for that day's Sitting.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 19th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

NEW WRIT ISSUED.

For the County of Essex (South or Romford Division), *v.* James Theobald, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General to what extent advantage has been taken of "The Savings Bank Act, 1893," which increased the limits of investments in Post Office Savings Banks ?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : I am glad to state that considerable advantage has been taken by Post Office Savings Bank depositors of the new Savings Bank Act which came into operation on the 21st December last. It appears that, in little more than two months, 29,400 depositors availed them-

selves of the extension of the annual limit for Savings Bank deposits, representing an aggregate additional sum of £423,639. Nine thousand six hundred and twelve of these persons deposited £50 each in lump sums. During the first two months of the present year, £5,878,173 was deposited, a sum which exceeded by no less than £1,017,840 the amount during the first two months of 1893. As regards Government Stock, investments in excess of the old annual limit were made during the first two months by 1,500 persons, the excess amounting to £67,904 Stock. Four hundred and forty-eight of these investments were of £200 each. In the same period 424 persons made investments in excess of the former total limit of £300, the excess amounting to £32,147 Stock. Twenty-nine persons increased their total holding to £500.

IRISH VETERINARY INSPECTORS.

DR. AMBROSE (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many Veterinary Inspectors, either temporary or permanent, have been appointed in Ireland within the past 12 months; how many of these so appointed are Irishmen; and how many names are at present on the list of candidates seeking appointments as Privy Council Veterinary Inspectors?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): There were no permanent Veterinary Inspectors appointed in Ireland during the period stated, but 12 temporary Inspectors have been appointed. The Veterinary Department has no official information as to the nationality of the gentlemen appointed, though it is believed that 11 out of the 12 are Irishmen. The reply to the concluding paragraph of the question is, 21.

LABOUR ON NEW SHIPS.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty the amount expended on labour and contract work between the 1st of April, 1893, and the 31st of March, 1894, on each of the following ships: *Magnificent, Majestic, Renown, Powerful, Terrible*?

Mr. A. Morley

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The information asked for is contained in the Programme of Works in Progress on Ships Building appearing in the Navy Estimates for 1894-5.

MONAGHAN ASYLUM TEA CONTRACTS.

MR. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tea contracts for the Monaghan and Cavan District Asylum have been given for the last seven years to Mr. Robert Greveen, hotel keeper, Monaghan, who is not a tea merchant; whether he is aware that, in reply to annual advertisements for tenders, merchants sending samples rarely find them examined or tested, and, in consequence, many have ceased to take any trouble in the matter; whether he will take steps to secure open competition; and whether the Board of Control has any power over the disposal of such contracts?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums inform me that the fact is as stated in the first paragraph, except that the trader named is a wholesale tea merchant. All contracts for the asylum are perfectly open, and are advertised in the usual manner in local newspapers; and, as regards the tea contract, I understand that all the samples sent in were examined by the Governors before the tender was accepted. The Board of Control has no responsibility in the matter of the acceptance of asylum contracts, which are dealt with by the Board of Governors.

NEW BATTLESHIPS LAUNCHED IN 1893.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state for the information of the House the tonnage in battleships launched in 1893 for the Navies of the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the United States?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The tonnage of battleships launched in 1893 was as follows:—France, 29,929 tons; Russia, 12,490 tons; United States, 30,600 tons. No battleship was launched in this country in 1893.

FLITWICK SCHOOL BOARD.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): In the absence of the hon. Member for the Penrith Division of Cumberland, I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he has yet arrived at any decision with regard to the action of the Flitwick School Board in discontinuing the construction of the school buildings sanctioned by the last School Board of Flitwick and by the Education Department, and thereby imposing a heavy burden upon the rates of the parish; and whether he can communicate his decision to the House?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I am glad to say that the Flitwick School Board have now come to an arrangement with the Department, and undertaken to carry out the plans agreed upon without any further delay.

THE WEST INDIAN MAILS.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has received a Memorial from firms in the United Kingdom interested in the regular arrival and prompt delivery of the mails from the British West Indies and South America; whether the incoming mail when it arrives at Plymouth, between the hours of 8 p.m. and 4 a.m., is detained for several hours owing to the discontinuance of provision for a special train, thereby delaying the delivery of letters in England and Scotland for a whole business day; and whether he will take such steps, by providing a special train when necessary, as will carry out the requirements of the contract, and ensure the earliest possible delivery of the West Indian and South American mails in the United Kingdom?

MR. A. MORLEY: Such a Memorial has been received and duly answered. When the mails in reaching Plymouth miss the night mail train to London, they have to be detained for some hours to go by the next ordinary train; and the use of a special train for them is not, in my opinion, warranted unless an interval for reply by the next outgoing mail is to be obtained by that means only. The delay does not amount to a whole business day. In London, Bir-

mingham, and other places it is only a few hours. In Scotland the letters, instead of being delivered late in the day after their arrival at Plymouth, are delivered the following morning. I am not aware of any provision in the Mail Contract requiring the use of special trains.

QUEEN CHIKANGA'S CONSORT.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will institute an inquiry into the circumstances under which Fambisa, the husband of Queen Chikanga, was killed by the orders of Mr. Fort, the Chartered Company's Resident Magistrate at Umtali, on 8th January, 1894?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Secretary of State has called for a Report on the whole affair referred to in the question.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION IN CAMBERWELL.

MR. E. H. BAYLEY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if his attention has been called to a report of the hearing of several summonses at the Lambeth Police Court on the 7th instant against parents for neglecting to educate their children, when one parent stated that she had taken her children to six schools in the neighbourhood, giving up a day's work for the purpose, and only obtained admission for one child, and that Mr. Williams, the District Superintendent, informed the Magistrate that there was great lack of school accommodation in Camberwell; and whether he will take measures to require the London School Board to provide the necessary accommodation?

MR. ACLAND: My attention has not been called to the report in question. The parish of Camberwell forms part of the East Lambeth Division of the London School Board area. In the part of this Division which borders on West Lambeth there is pressure on the schools owing to a deficiency of school accommodation in the West Lambeth Division. The School Board have in their possession a site in Sub-division H of West Lambeth, and have been informed by the

Department that they should proceed at once with the erection of a school in that sub-division. The Board are also about to build another school in Holland Road, in Sub-division Z of West Lambeth. The site has been scheduled in the Bill, which will be introduced this Session. When these schools are opened the pressure on the neighbouring East Lambeth schools will be relieved. I am not aware of any other deficiency of school accommodation which affects the parish of Camberwell, but I have directed the Chief Inspector to report on the Division generally.

ENGINE-ROOM COMPLEMENTS.

MR. PENN (Lewisham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether any Reports against the reduction of engine-room complements carried out in 1892 have been received at the Admiralty?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Some adverse Reports have been received, and they have been considered by a Committee, who do not in consequence propose any modification of the general principle in accordance with which these complements were framed.

PENSION ERRORS.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that a second error has been made of a sovereign in the pension of Warder Martin, of Portsmouth Prison; and if this is the same man who was last year called upon to refund a sum of money paid him by a mistake of the Treasury Department?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): Yes; this is the same man who was last year called upon to refund a sum of money paid him through a Treasury mistake. As explained in my previous answer with regard to this case, this sum, amounting to £10 7s. 10d., is now being recouped by monthly deductions of 5s. 9d. from his pension spread over three years. Martin's pension is payable at the end of each quarter, but by the universal rule he receives advances at the end of the first and second months of the quarter; the advance which was due to him last month, after a deduction of 5s. 9d. had

been made, was £2 19s. 3d.; but as through a mistake deductions of 5s. 2d. only had been made during the 10 preceding months a further deduction of 5s. 10d. had to be made to rectify the error. The sum thus due to Martin was £2 13s. 5d., and this sum he has received.

INDIAN COTTON DUTIES.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if, in the event of the Government of India agreeing to charge an Excise Duty upon cotton goods manufactured in India, he will assent to a charge of a corresponding Import Duty upon cotton goods imported from the United Kingdom?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): If the Government of India should be able to propose a countervailing Excise Duty upon cotton goods manufactured in India it would, in my opinion, remove a serious objection to the imposition of an Import Duty; but at present I can only say that such a proposal, if it is received, will receive the careful consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

REPORT ON TRADES UNIONS.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Report on Trade Unions for the year 1892 is not yet out; whether he is aware that the Unions are rapidly issuing and sending out the Reports for 1893 before the Official Report of the Board of Trade has been published; and will he explain the cause of the delay?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): The Trade Union Report for 1892 is now partly in the Press, and will be ready shortly. It is impossible to avoid delay in the preparation of this Annual Report. The Returns on which it is based are not wholly received by the Registrar of Friendly Societies, who lends them to the Board of Trade until the Autumn of the year following that to which they refer.

BRADFORD BARRACKS.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he can now state when the

repairs of Bradford Barracks will be proceeded with?

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (MR. WOODALL, Hanley): A detailed examination of these barracks has just been made by the Commanding Royal Engineer and the Principal Medical Officer of the North-Western District, with the result that though the barracks are not of the most modern type there is very little to complain of. The buildings are substantial and in fair repair. The Hospital is not sufficiently warmed; but steps will be taken before next Winter to remedy this and some other small defects. During the recent coal strike these barracks were unavoidably overcrowded; but there is ample room for the three companies which ordinarily are stationed at Bradford.

MR. CAINE: I shall call attention to this matter on the Estimates.

MR. WOODALL: I shall be happy to show the hon. Member the Report on which my answer is founded.

WATERFORD DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Board of Control of the Waterford District Lunatic Asylum appointed a clerk of works without consulting the Governors of the Institution; and whether such an appointment can be made the subject of re-consideration.

MR. J. MORLEY: The appointment of a clerk of works to superintend the erection of the additions which are now being made to this asylum was, I am informed, a necessary appointment, and one which devolved upon the Board of Control. It is the practice of the Board to consult Boards of Governors in the cases of all such appointments; but the Board of Control explain that they did not think it necessary to do so in the present instance, as the same clerk was appointed who had been nominated by the Governors to superintend similar work on a former occasion and who had given satisfaction in the discharge of his duties.

IRISH-SPEAKING MAGISTRATES.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland whether any of the Magistrates or Clerks of Petty Sessions in the Provinces of Connaught and Munster, and in the Counties of Donegal, Derry, Tyrone, Armagh, and Cavan, speak Irish, and how many; whether a procedure is adopted to secure that persons charged with offences have those charges and the evidence explained to them; have any civil proceedings been taken against or by Irish-speaking persons in recent times at Petty Sessions; how many persons speaking Irish only have been confined in gaols, lunatic asylums, and unions; how many are now confined therein; and how many of these officials speak Irish?

MR. J. MORLEY: This question was only placed on the Paper on Saturday last, and it is quite impossible to reply to it at such short notice. To collect the information indicated in the question, it would be necessary to address inquiries to at least four Irish Departments—namely, the Local Government Board, the Prisons Board, Inspectors of Lunatics, and the Register of Petty Sessions Clerks, and, in all probability, the assistance of the Lord Chancellor and the Royal Irish Constabulary will have to be invoked. Besides, I would point out that the question does not define for what particular period the information is required. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will place himself in communication with me before repeating the question.

MR. FIELD: Under the circumstances, I should desire to give the right hon. Gentleman a few days' notice.

SERGEANT INSTRUCTORS OF VOLUNTEERS.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somerset, Wellington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether non-commissioned officers appointed Sergeant Instructors of Volunteers continue to serve under their Army engagements, and are subject to all penalties and privileges involved under such engagements; and, if so, what is the reason that they are excluded from the privilege of obtaining return tickets at single fares when proceeding on furlough?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): Sergeant Instructors of Volunteers have the same military status

as non-commissioned officers serving with Regular troops. The privilege of obtaining return tickets at single fares when proceeding on furlough is a concession entirely within the discretion of the Railway Companies to give or to withhold, and, as explained in my reply to the hon. Member for St. Helens on the 16th of last month, the Railway Companies have not felt themselves able to extend the privilege to non-commissioned officers of the Army serving as Sergeant Instructors of Volunteers.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AT STRATTON.

MR. OWEN (Cornwall, Launceston) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the case of "Pridham v. Jennings," heard before the Magistrates at Stratton, North Cornwall, on Monday, the 12th instant, where the prisoner, accused of a trifling offence, elected to be tried summarily, and was so tried, pleading not guilty; the Bench disagreed, one Magistrate saying the accused ought to be discharged, and left the Bench followed by another Magistrate; the two remaining Magistrates committed the accused to take his trial at Bodmin Quarter Sessions, a long distance from Kilkhampton, where the accused and his witnesses live, and without railway communication; and did the Magistrates act within their powers by committing the accused after trying him with his consent under the summary jurisdiction procedure; and, if not, will he take steps in the matter?

MR. ASQUITH : I am in communication with the Justices, but have not yet received any reply. Perhaps my hon. Friend would postpone this question until Thursday, by which time I hope to have the necessary information.

CLOGHER VALLEY TRAMWAY.

MR. M'GILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that the ratepayers of the district through which the Clogher Valley Tramway runs, in County Fermanagh, strongly opposed its construction, fearing it would not prove a remunerative undertaking; and whether, since their anticipations have been realised, and they in consequence suffer a large pecuniary loss by reason of the

baronial guarantee, any steps are likely to be taken to relieve them of the heavy tax imposed under "The Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883"?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : I am not aware of the circumstances stated in the first paragraph. I know of no method by which the burden on the ratepayers could be reduced except by a commutation, in some form, of the Treasury contribution to the guarantee. This would require legislation, and I am considering whether it would be possible to introduce a short Bill on the subject with a sufficient prospect of passing it into law.

IRISH GUN LICENCES.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the case of Mr. John Lee, a farmer residing at Corraduff, in the Parish of Loughkean, County Tipperary, adjoining Birr, King's County, who was charged by a landlord for shooting game on his land; is he aware that, although on the hearing of the case the charge was dismissed, Mr. Lee was soon after deprived of his gun licence, which he held for a number of years; and whether he will cause full inquiry into the facts of the case, and as to the ground on which Mr. Lee was deprived of his licence?

MR. J. MORLEY : It is a fact that on the 1st February the licence held by this person was revoked by an Order of the Lord Lieutenant. The Order was not issued in consequence of the proceedings instituted against Mr. Lee at the suit of a landlord, and the District Inspector of Constabulary states he was not aware of these proceedings when the licence was revoked. As a matter of fact, the Police Reports, which were made prior to the revocation of the licence, contain no reference whatever to the prosecution of Lee for shooting game. But I intend to direct inquiry into the case.

DOMINICA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Report of the Special Commissioner on the affairs of Dominica has yet

been received ; whether the Government has yet considered and come to any decision on the Report ; and whether any probable date can be given for the presentation of the Report to Parliament ?

MR. S. BUXTON : The Report has just been received. The Secretary of State has not had time yet to study it, and therefore no decision has been, or can be, taken immediately on the important matter to which it relates. Later on in the Session there is no doubt the Report can be laid, though not at present.

THE WAR MINISTER AND THE PATRIOTIC FUND.

CAPTAIN NAYLOR - LEYLAND (Colchester) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has any direct jurisdiction or control over the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, and whether it is through him that these Commissioners are responsible to Parliament ; could he state the total amount subscribed by the public to the Balaclava Fund, the amount disbursed out of it to Balaclava veterans, the amount now remaining, the cost of management since 1890, and the number of Balaclava survivors in 1890 as well as now ; could he undertake to lay before Parliament the accounts of the Fund, showing the expenditure and receipts, the names of the survivors, and the amounts they severally received, up to the date the balance was handed over to the Patriotic Commissioners, as well as a balance-sheet giving similar particulars during the time it has been administered by the Commissioners ; and under whose authority was the balance transferred to the Patriotic Commissioners ; was it that of the subscribers to the Fund ?

***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** The Secretary of State for War has only such indirect control over the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund as arises from his Ministerial responsibility for advice tendered to Her Majesty, and from the fact that he is their mouthpiece in Parliament. The Balaclava Fund was a private subscription, as to which I cannot undertake any responsibility ; and as to which the accounts were published at the time the money was raised. I am informed that the total sum subscribed was £6,804 12s. 6d. That the committee of the Fund paid £3,766 12s. to

Balaclava veterans ; and transferred £2,949 19s. 6d. in February, 1892, to the Patriotic Fund, the small balance of £88 ls. having been absorbed in necessary expenses. The proceedings of the Patriotic Fund Commissioners to the end of 1892 are shown in their Report last presented, and the statement will be continued to the end of last year in their next Report to Her Majesty ; but I am told that £2,800 remained available on December 31 last, out of which, as at present advised, the Commissioners pay the equivalent of 10 pensions of 7s. each a week ; the number of men receiving now either that amount or smaller sums in aid of pension being 15. So far as is known the survivors do not exceed 74 ; but of that number some may be dead, whose deaths have not been reported. The Fund was transferred to the Commissioners by the original trustees as the best and most economical mode of applying the balance for the advantage of the beneficiaries.

THE FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) : In the absence of the hon. Member for Waterford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he now prepared to announce the names of gentlemen who will form the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland, the terms of the Reference, and the date of the issue of the Commission ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I am still unable to give my hon. Friend the names of the Commissioners ; but the matter is engaging my active consideration, and I hope to state the decision very shortly.

BOARD OF IRISH LIGHTS.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that on the night of the 18th of November, 1893, the buoy on the Briggs Reef, in Belfast Lough, was driven by a north-easterly gale a considerable distance inshore of its proper position ; whether this was notified to the Board of Irish Lights early on the morning of the 20th, in order that temporary measures might be taken to warn passing vessels of the danger ; whether he is aware that no steps of the kind

were taken, and that, misled by the misplaced buoy, the *Betsy* ketch, on the afternoon of 21st November, struck upon the wreck of the *Emily* steamer (which was lost on this shoal in 1884), the crew escaping with great difficulty in their own boat; whether he is aware that the attention of the Irish Lights Board has been repeatedly called to the danger to which vessels navigating Belfast Lough, and more especially the fishermen of Bangor and Groomsport, and the lifeboat stationed at the latter place, are exposed by the existence of this iron wreck; whether, although the cost of its removal would be very small, they have hitherto refused to take any steps for that purpose; whether, as the owner of the *Betsy* is a poor man, wholly dependent on the earnings of his vessel, which was uninsured, and was lost through the negligence of this body, anything can be done to compensate him; and whether, in view of these circumstances, the Government will take steps to place upon the Board of Irish Lights some representatives of the shipping interest of the Port of Belfast, who will have regard to the safety of the lives and property of those navigating the lough?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have received from the Commissioners of Irish Lights the following statement:—

"The buoy marking the Briggs Reef was reported to the Commissioners as being out of position, and when the weather permitted a steamer was sent to replace it. On the 24th November the commander of the Commissioners' steamer examined the position of the buoy, and found that the buoy had not drifted but simply stretched its mooring chain to the full length during the gale. The coastguard having reported the buoy as out of position, the Commissioners assumed it to be true and issued a cautionary 'notice to mariners,' and informed the Belfast Harbour Board; these steps were taken immediately the Report was received, and the Commissioners cannot admit that there was any delay, nor can they recognise any liability. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has, on a former occasion, represented to the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the wreck of the *Emily* on the Briggs Reef constituted a danger to the Groomsport Lifeboat; but the Commissioners were unable to acquiesce in the views of the Lifeboat Institution, and therefore have not advised that that wreck should be removed at the expense of the Mercantile Marine Fund. The Commissioners have received no other representations, nor is the wreck in navigable waters."

I notice that a Bill has already been introduced by several hon. Members to amend the constitution of the Board of

Irish Lights, and until I see that Bill in print I am unable to say anything with regard to it.

COLONEL WARING: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the fact that the *Betsy* was outside Briggs buoy at the time she struck is consistent with the statement of the Irish Lights Board?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have read the statement given me by the Commissioners.

COLONEL WARING: But is not that statement inconsistent with the fact I have mentioned?

MR. MUNDELLA: I can add nothing to the answer.

COLONEL WARING: Yes, but this unfortunate man has lost his property—

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Notice should be given of any further question.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Are we to understand that the Commissioners of Irish Lights gave notice to mariners that the buoy was out of position before they had ascertained whether that was so, and at a time indeed when it was not so?

MR. MUNDELLA: They gave the notice in consequence of the Report of the coastguard. As soon as possible they sent their steamer to it, and found that the buoy had not drifted, but had simply stretched its mooring chain to the utmost limit.

MR. W. FIELD: Will the right hon. Gentleman take into consideration the recommendations made to the Board of Trade by the Chambers of Commerce on the subject of re-constituting the Irish Lights Board?

MR. MUNDELLA: The whole question of the position of the Irish Lights Commission is under the consideration of the Chief Secretary and myself.

MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolutions passed by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom, and of various Irish local Chambers of Commerce, with regard to the present unrepresentative constitution of the Board of Commissioners of Irish Lights, and urging the desirability of a reform of it; and whether the Government have any intention of introducing a Bill to reform this Board; and, if not, whether they

Colonel Waring

will give facilities to private Members to bring in such a Bill?

MR. J. MORLEY: I agree that the present constitution of the Board cannot be regarded as satisfactory. In saying that, however, I must not be taken as denying that there are many gentlemen on the Board who attend to the matters before them with great interest, great intelligence, and with administrative ability. I do not know that I shall be able to introduce a Bill at present, but the subject is receiving the attention of the Department concerned.

MR. WOLFF: Will the Government give any facilities to a Private Bill dealing with the constitution of the Board?

MR. J. MORLEY: Until I have seen the Private Bill I cannot answer the question.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): One of my hon. Friends has given notice of a Bill, and as the Irish Members are practically unanimous on the subject, I hope the Bill will receive favourable consideration from the Government.

MR. WOLFF: As it is not likely a Bill will be passed in a short time, can nothing be done to compel the Board to attend to duties which are now neglected?

MR. J. MORLEY: If any proper representation is made to the Board they will attend to it, I am sure.

FINANCE IN THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to a pledge given in reference to the military expenditure of the Straits Settlements by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons on 25th June, 1891, that if the revenues of the Colony should decrease so that they were less able to bear this contribution than they now are, the Government would feel inclined to review the situation; whether the revenue of the Colony has decreased from 4,409,927 dollars in 1889 to 3,817,890 in 1894; whether, in the same period, the military contribution has increased from 577,633 dollars to 842,100; and whether Her Majesty's Government are now prepared to review the situation?

MR. S. BUXTON: The question of the contribution has been under the consideration of the three Departments concerned. A Report has been drawn up by the Colonial Military Contribution Committee, but has not yet been submitted to the Departments. This, however, will shortly be done, and it is hoped that a decision will soon be arrived at. None of the facts and conditions affecting the question will be lost sight of.

THE "BOTHNIA."

MR. FORWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state the tonnage of the transport *Bothnia*, her speed, maximum number of adult persons she accommodates, and the average cost per head of their conveyance between the United Kingdom and India, including hire, coals, canal dues, and other charges payable by the Admiralty in respect thereof; also the average cost per head for similar voyages on Her Majesty's Indian troopships since they have been built, including crews' wages, victualling, coals, canal dues, repairs, maintenance, and other expenses incident to their employment, but excluding any allowance for interest on capital cost, depreciation, or risk of loss; also their average tonnage, speed, and maximum number of persons carried in each?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The *Bothnia* is a ship of 4,535 tons gross measurement; her maximum speed is 13½ knots, and she carries on Indian service 1,127 adults. The average cost per head cannot be accurately stated until the accounts are closed, but approximately it will be £7 18s. 4d. The rate of hire was arranged at a time when rates were very low, and the case is so exceptional that no fair comparison of the cost of hired and Government troopships can be founded on it. The average cost of the Indian troopships since the commencement of the service has been £12 0s. 1d. per adult carried. But the employment of four ships making three voyages each, instead of, as formerly, five ships making fewer voyages, has reduced the cost of Indian troopships to £9 9s. 1d. per adult. The Indian troopships have a maximum speed of 12 knots, but they are worked at a speed of 11 knots. Their gross tonnage averages 4,487 tons, and their maximum accommodation is 1,385 adults.

There are, of course, advantages in Government troopships which are a set-off against the difference of cost.

IRONCLADS AT SEA.

MR. FORWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the total number of days H.M.S. *Amphion*, *Camperdown*, *Dreadnought*, *Edinburgh*, *Royal Sovereign*, and *Rodney* were each out of harbour and at sea during the 12 months ending the 30th September last, and the total number of knots they traversed, with their aggregate complement of men and officers?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The figures asked for would take some time to read to the House, with certain necessary observations upon them. I propose to hand them to my right hon. Friend for his information.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IN PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he would state why the Irish Board of Works have withdrawn permits for carts and vans through the Phoenix Park; what is the explanation of the passage in their Circular which requires that, pending such arrangements as it may be found desirable to make, tradesmen's carts, vans, &c., will be allowed to pass through the Parkgate Street and Castleknock Gates on the drivers satisfying the gatekeepers, by the production of a voucher, that they require to deliver goods in the Park or in places conveniently served from Castleknock Gate; and that the use by carters of all except the Parkgate Street and Castleknock Gates will be discontinued; who is responsible for, and who took the initiative in, securing the proposed exclusion; how long has this right been exercised; if he is aware that its withdrawal would be a great inconvenience to the market gardeners and shopkeepers in the vicinity of the strawberry beds who supply Dublin with fruit and vegetables; and whether he is aware that the Board of Works, while thus restricting an old public right, lately allowed a road to be broken through the Park wall and a special entrance given direct from the new barracks into the Park for the sole use of the military?

Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Restrictions have alone been imposed for the prevention of heavy traffic through the side entrances to the Park, it having been found that a very serious abuse had arisen in consequence of the bad condition in which the roads along the north and south of the Park have been left by the County Authorities, owing to which traders' vans, wagons, &c., were using the Park roads exclusively. The object of the Circular was to discover how much of the traffic was absolutely necessary—i.e., for houses or public institutions in the Park, or for the district conveniently served from Castleknock Gate, and how much was due to the use of the Park roads as a mere matter of convenience and of necessity. The Board of Works, as statutory custodians of the Park, took the steps referred to in the general interest of the public frequenting the Park as a pleasure resort. The system of passes was in force for many years, but it would be difficult to ascertain exactly for how many. I will communicate with the Board of Works as to the extent of the alleged inconvenience to market gardeners in the vicinity of the strawberry beds, with a view to seeing whether any relaxation of the Rule now laid down is called for by the necessities of the case. Subject to the observance of the primary object of the Park as a pleasure ground, the garrison is allowed to use a portion of the Park for military purposes, and the Board of Works have recently allowed a gate to be opened into the new Marlborough Barracks for the convenience of the Military Authorities, and to reduce the inconvenience to the public of the occupation of the public and Park roads by regiments proceeding to the 15 acres.

MR. SEXTON: As this pass system was instituted at the instance of the Grand Jury of the County of Dublin, will the right hon. Gentleman have any objection to again consulting that body?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I see no objection.

THE FEATHERSTONE RIOTS.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is now able to state the result of his consideration of the claims to compensation arising out of the Featherstone Riots, and give

the names of those who are to receive such compensation, and the amounts and date when the same is likely to be paid? The hon. Member also asked as to the accuracy of the statements in the papers on the subject.

MR. ASQUITH: The papers have not accurately stated the facts. I have been for some weeks in communication with my hon. Friend the Member for the Osgoldeross Division, and with his assistance (to which I am much indebted for the necessary local information) I have arranged the amount and the apportionment of the allowances which I intimated some time ago that the Government hoped to be able to make. I shall be happy to supply my hon. Friend privately with the details. The general result of the arrangement is that £100 will be paid to the families of each of the two men who were killed, and a further sum of £200 will be distributed among nine other men, who were more or less seriously wounded, and as to whom it has been established to my satisfaction that they took no part in the riotous proceedings which led to and justified the action of the soldiers.

LOANS TO IRISH LEASEHOLDERS.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether tenant farmers in Ireland holding by lease, who desire to obtain a loan from the Board of Public Works for the improvement of their holdings, are required to register their leases and lodge them at the Office of Public Works; and, if so, when this rule came into operation?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Tenants holding by lease must satisfy the Board of Works, on application for loans from the Board of Public Works, of the registration of their leases when the latter are within the Registration of Deeds Act, 6 Anne, c. 2. Such leases require to be registered in order to give them validity, and to render loans made upon them secure. The leases have in all cases to be submitted to the solicitors of the Board of Works with a view to the examination of the title—a requirement insisted on by all lenders on the security of leaseholds. The Rule of the Board respecting registration and lodgment of lease has always been in force as regards loans to lessees under the Land

Improvement Act, 10 Vict. c. 32, and has since 1884 been enforced on applications for loans by tenants under the Land Law Act of 1881.

MR. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether a tenant farmer in Ireland whose tenure is leasehold, and who has a valuable interest in his holding, can obtain a loan for its improvement to an extent of five times the Poor Law valuation of the holding?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am informed that a tenant farmer in Ireland whose tenure is leasehold can obtain a loan under the Land Improvement Act, 10 Vict. c. 32, to the extent of seven times the Poor Law valuation of his holding if he has an unexpired term of 40 years. If he holds for two lives or for an unexpired term of 25 years he can obtain a loan to the same extent, provided he furnishes satisfactory collateral security for its repayment. In the absence of such collateral security no loan can be made to him under the Land Improvement Act. A leaseholder whose tenure is less than two lives or 25 years unexpired can borrow under the Land Law Act of 1881, to the extent of five times the valuation, if he offers satisfactory collateral security, or if his landlord postpones the rent to the Board's loan, or if the rent of the holding is virtually nominal.

DOVER PIER DUES.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that since the transfer of the Admiralty Pier at Dover to the control of the Dover Harbour Board pier dues have been levied, as was not formerly the case, on the Belgian Mail Packets using that pier, and that a sum of £1,305 3s. 4d., for which no provision had been made in the Estimates, thus became payable from the Post Office to the Dover Harbour Board, involving the creation of a new charge upon a Vote of Parliament; and whether, in settling the conditions of the transfer of this pier from Her Majesty's Government to the Local Authorities, the circumstance was taken into consideration that this would involve giving power to those authorities to levy this large annual charge upon the Post Office Packet Service?

MR. MUNDELLA: The Belgian Mail Packets are Government vessels, and as long as the pier at Dover was under the control of a Government Department that Department made no charge for dues to vessels belonging to another Government. After the transfer in March, 1892, the pier became part of Dover Harbour, and the Harbour Board decided, in pursuance of their Acts of Parliament, to charge these vessels with dues; treating them as essentially commercial vessels and engaged in carrying passengers and goods for profit in the same manner as the Calais Mail Packets belonging to the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company. This circumstance does not appear to have formed part of the conditions of the transfer.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Can the right hon. Gentleman suggest any answer to the last paragraph of the question. Was the probability of this charge taken into consideration?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have said it does not appear to have formed part of the conditions made in March, 1892.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Yes, it did not form part of the conditions, but was it taken into consideration that charges of this kind would be levied?

MR. MUNDELLA: As it formed no part of the conditions it evidently was not considered.

THE MATCH GIRLS' STRIKE AT BOW.

MR. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that Mr. Mead, the Magistrate of the Thames Police Court, when trying on 14th March one of the girls at present on strike at the works of Messrs. Bell, match makers, at Bow, for window breaking, addressed one of the witnesses in the case to the effect that unless she was careful she would find herself in his Court; that it was disgraceful and scandalous that she should have interfered with other girls trying to earn an honest living; that she had no business at Messrs. Bells' gate; that she would neither work herself nor let others work; that she had tried to intimidate girls on their way to work, and that he would not allow it; and that if she were brought before him he would deal severely with her; and, if such

words were used, what action he proposes to take in reference to a Magistrate who so addresses a witness with reference to whom or to whose action there was no evidence and no question before the Court; and whether the Magistrate's statement that the witness had no business at Messrs. Bells' gate is in accordance with the law as it relates to what is known as picketing?

MR. ASQUITH: I have been informed by the Magistrate that the witness in question, upon being asked in cross-examination what her object was in going to the factory, stated that it was to "hoot and holloa." At the end of her evidence he thought it only fair to point out to her that such conduct was wrong, and might bring her into trouble and cause her to be charged at the Police Court. He further explained that she and her friends had a perfect right to refuse to work for any individual, but that she had no right to try and intimidate others from doing the work which she thought proper to refuse to do. He said, further, that if cases of intimidation and violence were brought before him he should have to deal severely with them. He informed me that no question of legal "picketing" was raised, and that he did not in any way condemn that practice.

MR. MACDONALD: Did the learned Magistrate tell the girl she had no right to stand in the gate?

MR. ASQUITH: He told her she had no right to stand there for the purpose of hooting and holloaing.

STAFF OFFICERS' PAY AT THE AUTUMN MANŒUVRES.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War will he explain why Staff Officers and Umpires employed at the Autumn Manœuvres last year received no allowance or travelling expenses; and is he aware that, in consequence, many officers who would have been valuable and who were anxious to avail themselves of this practical training could not afford to do so?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I understand that in some cases the General Officers who were responsible for the expenditure of the money allowed for manœuvres, and who had a laudable desire to make it go as far as possible,

made arrangements whereby certain officers, not on full pay, undertook the discharge of Staff duties, with acting Staff pay of 15s. a day, receiving tent accommodation and forage for their horses. I am not sure that the arrangement is free from objection, and I will look into the matter.

THE IRISH CHURCH SURPLUS.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at what amount the Irish Church surplus now stands; what are the charges to which the fund is now subject; and what is the total amount of such charges?

MR. J. MORLEY: As explained in an answer to the hon. Member for North Paddington on May 11, 1893 (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xii., p. 633), it is not possible to give a simple answer as to the amount of surplus on the Irish Church Fund. Figures and observations as to the receipts and expenditure upon the Irish Church Account in 1892-3 will be found on page 17 of the last Report of the Irish Land Commission [C. 7056], and on pages 4 to 9 of the audited accounts of the Church temporalities for the same year (House of Commons, No. 503 of 1893-4). A statement of the charges (capital liabilities) will be found on p. 10 of the last-named account. An estimate for 1893-4 will be found on page 80 [C. 7056], upon which it may be observed that the anticipated deficit of £49,000 will be more than covered by the proceeds of sales. Perhaps the most convenient course would be that the hon. and learned Member should refer to these Papers, and ask for further information upon any point which may still not be clear to him.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask whether, in view of the forthcoming legislation, the right hon. Gentleman will suggest to the Land Commission to make an estimate of the present value of this fund and of the receipts and charges?

MR. J. MORLEY: I think it is desirable that some statement should be made in view of any demand which may arise.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Are we then to understand that evicted tenants will be paid out of the funds of the Church?

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member is not to understand anything beyond what I have stated.

THE EVICTED TENANTS BILL.

MR. CLANCY: On behalf of the hon. Member for Waterford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when he hopes to lay before the House the provisions of the Bill for the restoration of the Evicted Tenants in Ireland; and whether that Bill will be the first of the Government measures proceeded with?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not able to state the precise date. It will not be the first of the Government measures to be proceeded with. The first will be the Electoral and Registration Reform Bill.

IRISH MANUSCRIPTS.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what grants were made by Parliament for the publication of Irish manuscripts in the year 1892-3; to whom were they made; and how have they been applied?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Under the Stationery Office Vote £200 was voted for 1892-3, payable to a committee for superintending the editing of the Brehon laws. Nothing, however, was spent in that year. Under Vote 6 of Class IV. of the Civil Service Estimates for 1892-3 there was voted £400 for researches into and publication of Celtic manuscripts included in the grant to the Royal Irish Academy. The Royal Irish Academy also spent in that year £267 for transcription, editing, and publication of the Annals of Ulster, which was recouped to them by a Vote of the same amount in 1893-4. There had been no Vote for this purpose in 1892-3.

THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN IRISH SCHOOLS.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in view of the fact that result fees are allowed for pupils in national schools under fifth class, and that pupils in Irish speaking districts remain in school after attaining fourth class, whether the Commissioners of Education are prepared to allow result fees for passes in Irish to pupils in all classes; whether tablets are used in national schools for instructing in Irish; whether the Com-

missioners of Education are prepared to reduce the price of Irish books; and whether the Inspectors in Irish speaking districts speak Irish, and how many?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that the existing arrangement limiting the award of results fees for proficiency in the Irish language to pupils in the fifth and sixth classes was only determined after mature consideration, and that at present they see no sufficient reason for altering the arrangement. Tablets are not used for instructing in Irish, but the primer of the rudiments of the language is supplied at the low price of 1½d. per copy. The Commissioners are not prepared to reduce the price of these books, which are now sold at first cost price. The Commissioners are not aware of the number of Inspectors who can speak Irish, but two of them are qualified to do so, having passed an examination in the language when candidates for Inspectorships.

THE COLLISION WITH PORTUGUESE TROOPS ON THE ZAMBESI.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now give the House any information respecting the reported collision between British and Portuguese forces on the Zambesi?

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Before the hon. Gentleman answers that question, may I ask him whether or not the Treaty gives such rights to each contracting party as are reasonable and necessary; whether it provides for the reference of disputes to arbitration; and whether there was a difficulty pending at the time the right was asserted by force?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I should be glad to have notice of questions as to the provisions of the Treaty. I have not the Treaty here, and it is not desirable I should inaccurately quote it. We have not yet heard definitely what has happened to give rise to this report of a collision on the Zambesi. Instructions have, however, been sent both by Her Majesty's Government and the Portuguese Government to prevent a recurrence of anything

of the kind, if a collision has already taken place.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: Is Mr. Johnston at present in Nyassaland, or is he on his way home?

SIR E. GREY: Mr. Johnston is coming home soon. I am not sure whether he has left.

SIR A. ROLLIT: Are we to understand that no definite details have been received at the Foreign Office?

SIR E. GREY: There have been various rumours that a collision has occurred, and certain information has been received which seems to make it probable that something has happened, but we have had no authentic or first-hand account of what has taken place.

THE MANICA PLATEAU.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what progress the negotiations with the Portuguese Government have made in regard to the delimitation of the Manica Plateau?

SIR E. GREY: The Portuguese Government have been informed that the principle of arbitration is accepted by Her Majesty's Government.

THE LUNACY LAWS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, in a case of the "Commissioners in Lunacy v. Sherrard" recently tried at the Central Criminal Court, Mr. Justice Grantham stated that, in order to get a conviction for keeping two lunatics in an unlicensed house, it must be proved that the two persons detained were not only of unsound mind, but that they were treated by the defendant as persons of unsound mind; and whether any change of the law is proposed in order to guard against the danger of the confinement of persons of unsound mind in unlicensed houses?

MR. ASQUITH: I am informed that Mr. Justice Grantham did direct the jury in the terms stated in the question. In so doing he followed the ruling of the late Mr. Justice Stephen in "The Queen v. Bishop," which was upheld in the Court of Crown Cases Reserved. I am not aware that in practice the law has been found defective, but if any case of abuse is brought before me I will

consider whether amendment is desirable and practicable.

RESERVE ARMY STORES.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE (Exeter) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state to the House whether the reserve stores of guns and rifles, small arms, clothing, and accoutrements have been increased or reduced in amount during the past 12 months; and, in either case, to what extent?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The reserve of guns remains the same as last year. Those of small arms and accoutrements have increased to a considerable extent. As to the reserve of clothing, there is an increase in absolute amount, but it is fair to add that the Army Reserve has increased in strength. Returns will be furnished at the end of the present financial year showing exactly how we stand in regard to reserve stock. These will receive our careful consideration, and steps will be taken, should any be necessary, to place the reserve clothing on a thoroughly sound footing.

THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, to enable a comparison to be made between the old and the present system of remuneration to the Law Officers of the Crown, he will consent to a Return showing the effect of the Treasury Minute of December, 1892, in respect of fees received by each of the Law Officers during the year 1893, on account of contentious business, complimentary briefs, fees from persons unconnected with the Public Service for business other than contentious done by them as Law Officers, and special fees named in the Minute; whether the arrangement named in the Minute, in consideration of which the new system was sanctioned limiting the business in which a Law Officer may appear as counsel for a private client to cases in the House of Lords and before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, has been strictly observed in all cases, or, if not, in what cases has it been departed from, and what were the reasons for such departure; whether the abolition of the right to appear for a private client is

limited to appearance in Court, or includes also Chamber practice; whether the abolition of that right has been modified by any regulation as to old or standing retainers; and, if so, what is the modification, and will he lay the terms of it upon the Table; and whether it is true that one of the Law Officers has been retained in the case of "*Sutherland v. Sutherland*," or in the *Salt Union* case?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby) : I have been requested by the Attorney General to give the following answer :—
1. There are no longer any complimentary briefs to the Law Officers, and no fees from persons unconnected with the Public Service for business other than contentious are paid to them. No special fees have been paid to the existing Law Officers. The figures asked for were given on January 12, in answer to a question by the hon. Member, and there appears to be no reason for a Return. 2. The arrangement referred to has been strictly observed. 3. The arrangement in question is not understood to forbid giving opinions in Chambers. 4. It expects retainers delivered before acceptance of office. 5. The answer to the last question is, yes; but in each of the cases a retaining fee had been given before the acceptance of office, and with reference to the litigation referred to in the question.

MR. HANBURY : Do they come strictly within the Treasury Minute?

SIR W. HARCOURT : I suppose so.

MR. HANBURY : Is that so?

SIR W. HARCOURT : I have given all the information I possess.

MR. HANBURY : Did I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that the retainer in the *Sutherland* case was given before the Attorney General took office? If so, is he aware that the late Duke of *Sutherland* died since the Government came into office?

SIR W. HARCOURT : I have given the information as I have it before me in the absence of the Attorney General. No cross-examination will extract from me knowledge which I do not possess.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I said I would mention to-day what the intentions of the Government were with reference to

the Business of the House. On Thursday the 29th instant we propose to take the Civil Service Estimates first, and after them the First Readings of the Equalisation of Rates (London) Bill and the Conciliation (Labour Disputes) Bill. On Monday, April 2, we propose to take the Motion for the appointment of the Scotch Grand Committee, the First Reading of the Scotch Local Government Bill, and the First Reading of the Factories Bill. On Thursday, the 5th of April, we propose to take the First Reading of the Electoral and Registration Reform Bills.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): With regard to the Business for Thursday, the 29th, do the Government propose to adjourn the discussion of the Civil Service Estimates before 12 o'clock, or do they only propose to take the First Readings the right hon. Gentleman mentioned if the particular class of Votes taken comes to an end before midnight?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I believe they are Bills which will not meet with opposition on the First Reading, and we shall hope to get them both. I do not think there is any body of gentlemen on either side of the House who will oppose the First Readings.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the right hon. Gentleman is quite correct in assuming that there is not the slightest chance of their being opposed, but, at the same time, we shall desire to have statements made on the introduction of the Bills, and there may possibly be some discussion on those statements. We should like to know, therefore, whether the Government intend to adjourn the business of Supply at some comparatively early hour of the evening, so as to give us time to discuss the statements.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think that would be quite reasonable.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): When will the Railway Rates Bill be brought forward?

SIR W. HARCOURT: At present I do not think I can say anything with regard to other Bills.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

The Right Hon. Herbert John Gladstone, for the Borough of Leeds (West Division.)

Sir W. Harcourt

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have come to the following Resolution—namely—

“That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament.”

CROWN LANDS BILL.

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Crown Lands Bill, with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

PRIVILEGE.

PRIVILEGE (INTERVENTION OF PEERS AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.)

*LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise for the purpose of asking the Clerk at the Table to read the third of the Election Sessional Orders passed at the beginning of the Session.

The Clerk at the Table read the Sessional Order as follows:—

“That it is a high infringement of the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom for any Lord of Parliament, or other Peer, or Prelate, not being a Peer of Ireland at the time elected, and not having declined to serve for any county, city, or borough of Great Britain, to concern himself in the Election of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament, except only any Peer of Ireland, at such Elections in Great Britain respectively where such Peer shall appear as a Candidate, or by himself, or any others be proposed to be elected; or for any Lord Lieutenant or Governor of any county to avail himself of any authority derived from his Commission, to influence the Election of any Member to serve for the Commons in Parliament.”

*LORD R. CHURCHILL: Then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on that Order I propose to submit to the House the following Motion:—

“That this House resolves that the Earl of Rosebery—

[*Ministerial laughter*].—

“a Peer of Parliament, First Lord of the Treasury, President of the Council, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Midlothian, has by his speech on the 17th March in Edinburgh, infringed the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom by concerning himself in the election of a Member to serve for the Borough of Leith for the Commons in Parliament.”

My Motion was greeted with a Ministerial laugh. As I have great concern

for the dignity of the Ministerial Bench I would advise that the laugh be deferred. I fear not that in bringing forward this Motion I am not doing a perfectly Parliamentary act—an act that is within the rights of Parliament—and in bringing it forward I am putting to the House the question: “Is this Sessional Order a reality or a sham?” I do not mean to put the matter so far on this occasion as to assert or argue that the House of Commons could act practically or definitely on any Breach of Privilege proved against Peers, but I do not ask the House to agree that it can and will enter a protest, and a protest with effect, against the interference of Peers in elections. Now I ask whether this Sessional Order operates or not? I adduce from that that it is the operation of this Rule which brings about that wholesome and regular practice which prevents the interference of Peers at General Elections, and which makes that Rule, which Peers have invariably adhered to, that they must have nothing to do with an election after a Writ has been issued. I ask also, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will answer this question and say whether there was any interference by Lord Rosebery in the Leith election. First of all, I would ask what was the absolute necessity of fixing the meeting in Edinburgh on the 17th of March? Could it not have been delayed till after the Leith election? Then I would ask, as a second question, Can any reasonable man suppose that Lord Rosebery could make a strong Party speech in Edinburgh which would not influence Leith? Remember, Leith is the port of Edinburgh, and is situated in the County of Midlothian, of which county Lord Rosebery is Lord Lieutenant, and it is impossible that a speech of that Party character could be delivered in Edinburgh which would not affect the Parliamentary constituency of Leith. I will digress for a moment to notice an allegation made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in answering a question last week. He said that Lord Beaconsfield had taken some action during an election in the County of Buckingham. Now, I have been to the trouble of ascertaining the facts of what really took place from authentic records, and I find that Lord Beaconsfield certainly did speak the day before the Bucks election, and that he

spoke at Aylesbury—that was, I think, in the beginning of the month of August, and the election was not until the 20th of September. The speech was delivered at an agricultural dinner, which, it is well known, Lord Beaconsfield constantly attended. His speech on that occasion consisted largely of reminiscences of the County of Bucks; but he also went into the Eastern Question, and I do not think it could be argued that the farmers of Bucks would be very much impressed by the details of the Eastern Question as it was at that time. At that time there were three Members for Bucks, which then enjoyed the distinction which I am glad no longer exists of a minority Member. So far as I can see from the records, Lord Beaconsfield made no allusion to the coming election. Parliament was not sitting when that speech was made, nor, so far as I can learn, did Ministers think it necessary when Parliament met to bring forward the question—but their not having done so is, I submit, not a reason which can damage this Motion. I now pass on from these facts of history to the Edinburgh speech. Lord Rosebery has many distinctions—he is a Peer of Parliament, First Minister of the Crown, President of the Council, and also Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian, where his influence is admittedly greater than in any other place. Can anyone reasonably suppose that if Lord Salisbury, who is Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, were to go down into any one of the four divisions of that county and make a strong Party speech, if an election were pending, such a speech would have no influence at all upon the coming election? Or do you suppose that if the Duke of Devonshire were to go down to Derbyshire and make a speech in that county, if an election were going on in any other part of the county, the same could not be said? There is, fortunately, no precedent in modern times of any Peer interfering in election matters or assisting their Party by making speeches in the neighbourhood of boroughs where elections are pending or actually going on. What would have been said by the present majority of the House of Commons if any Unionist Peer had done what Lord Rosebery did on Saturday last? I do not believe that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian himself would have spoken in

Midlothian if an election had been going on in one of the other divisions. He would have known too well that it was not the custom for Ministers to interfere in bye-elections. Lord Rosebery arrogates this right to himself alone among the Peers. He takes upon himself the right to go down to an election and make a strong Party speech in Edinburgh, which is not only near to Leith, but to Berwickshire, and where the influence of his speech must have extended also to the Border Burghs. I will read you what Lord Rosebery said to excuse himself. He said as follows :—

"I see it also reported that I have come here on an illegal visit, for the purpose of influencing the election for the Leith Burghs. I have a very great respect for the Leith Burghs, and I have a very great respect for their Representative, but I am bound to say that this visit to Edinburgh was planned before I knew that there would be an election for the Leith Burghs, and before I knew that their Representative would do me the honour of forming part of the present Government. I believe that I am strictly within the limits of my right in speaking within the City and County of Edinburgh at any time that I may think fit when there is no election for the city and county in progress. What are the disabilities of a Peer to be? I am denounced as being a lonely oligarch in an inaccessible House; but I begin to ask myself if I am not a sort of State prisoner, whose movements are watched, and who before he takes a ticket for any particular place must consider within himself whether an election for the House of Commons is being held within a certain radius of the railway station. All that is nonsense, and the Unionists know it to be nonsense."

Se you see Lord Rosebery said, "But this is all nonsense, and the Unionists know it to be nonsense." But he ought to have known when he went down to Edinburgh that the election was pending. The Writ was moved for on the first day that Parliament met—namely, on March 12. And do you mean to say that Lord Rosebery did not know that his Friend Mr. Munro-Ferguson had been appointed to a post under his own Government? At any rate, the Cabinet was formed on March 9, and it is reasonable to suppose that the course of affairs was known two or three days before that date. I cannot believe such ignorance on the part of the noble Lord, and I make this proposition—this Sessional Order has been passed for many years regularly. Some of you say that it is obsolete, and the necessity for it passed away with the old days. This Sessional Order has been passed

this Session with the assent of Her Majesty's Government, and therefore I hold that they are responsible for it, and I hold, further, that it lies with them not to be a party to turn that Order into ridicule. In order to show how close is the connection between Edinburgh County and Leith Burghs, I must refer for a moment to what passed in connection with the Fishery Bill for Scotland. For the purposes of that Bill the Secretary for Scotland treated Edinburgh as part of the County of Midlothian, and the Solicitor General for Scotland stated, in answer to a question by the hon. Member for West Edinburgh, that for the purposes of this Bill the City of Edinburgh was included in the County of Midlothian. The progress of the connection between Leith and Edinburgh, therefore, seems to have become a great deal closer; and if a Parliamentary Division like Leith is joined on to the County of Edinburgh for the purpose of rating under this Bill I say that there is a very strong connection between them. I pass now from that question, and I ask the House to consider what will be the result if it abolishes this Rule; and I particularly address my observations with great respect to those who are stronger Liberals than those who sit on the Front Bench. This Rule is the only foundation, the only barrier for the exclusion of Peers' influence from Parliamentary elections. If you abolish it the Peers might take part in any Parliamentary election, and in all the details of it. At a General Election they might be put on the committees of candidates, and they might also make their agents canvass for any candidate. They might attend any public meeting, or show themselves on the platform of any public meeting. They might take the most complete and most perfect part, as great a part as any Member of this House, in an election of Parliamentary candidates if this Order is made a dead letter, abolished, or treated as you are now treating it—with contempt. You may say that you will abolish the House of Lords, but that would not be the work of a day or of a year. I desire also to ask that if a Dissolution takes place on the question of the House of Lords having thrown out a Bill by their own opposition what will be the result? The whole force of the Peers, with all their speaking resources

—which are by no means to be despised—and all their other resources, will sweep over the country and argue their own case; and you will find, considering the enormous disproportion between Unionist Peers and Radical Peers, that it will make an enormous addition to the Unionist forces. You may contradict it, but I defy you to show that there is any law of any kind, if this Rule is abrogated, to prevent them; and I do not think that you could pass any such law. After abrogating your own powers you could not turn right round and say that the powers should again be instituted by law. I have been speaking seriously on this subject, and it is not, I submit, a subject for laughter, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to think at the beginning. It is a very serious matter, which the House of Commons must decide—that is to say, whether they will treat this Rule as an obsolete Order or whether they will treat it as an Order operating with great benefit to the privileges of the Members of the House of Commons. It is certain that if it disappears from the Order Book at the beginning of a Session, your Parliament will be exposed to new election influences which you have never had experience of for generations. I submit, therefore, that though Lord Rosebery cannot be summoned to the Bar of the House, I insist upon the Constitutional and electoral value and importance of this Sessional Order; and with these remarks I move the Motion which I have submitted.

MR. HANBURY seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That this House resolves that the Earl of Rosebery, a Lord of Parliament, First Lord of the Treasury, President of the Council, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Midlothian, has by his speech on the 17th March in Edinburgh, infringed the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom by concerning himself in the election of a Member to serve for the burgh of Leith for the Commons in Parliament.”—(*Lord R. Churchill.*)

SIR W. HARCOURT: I must congratulate the Unionist Party upon the field they have chosen for their first attack in force upon Her Majesty's Government. This, apparently, is the ground which they are prepared to take, and I am not sorry that it should have assumed the particular form of an attack on the

House of Lords. The noble Lord has said that this particular Peer who has committed this high crime and misdemeanour is not to be summoned to the Bar of this House. I thought that that was the particular form of collision between the House of Commons and the House of Lords which the Unionist Party desired to bring about; but the noble Lord having stated that he is not going to take that course, I should like to know what course the House of Commons is about to take when they have declared that a Prime Minister being a Peer has infringed the liberties of the House of Commons?

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I said it was a protest on the part of the House.

SIR W. HARCOURT: But a protest which comes to nothing is not only insignificant, but undignified; and for the House of Commons to make a declaration of that kind would be about the most contemptible position to take up that could be imagined and to ask the sanction of the House to be given to. I have no interest, and the Party on this side of the House have no interest, in maintaining the right of Peers to interfere in elections. Quite the contrary. At present there are about 500 Peers, who are constantly every week and every day interfering in elections.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: How?

SIR W. HARCOURT: In every way. On our side we have not one-tenth of the number of Peers who could interfere, and I do not think their resources are in proportion to those 500 who take such a large interest in election proceedings. I do not know whether the noble Lord has ever heard of an institution called the Primrose League? I say that our interest is quite in the direction of fettering if we could the interference of Peers in elections. But let us see what is this Standing Order on which the noble Lord rests his case. First of all, it says, “No Peer or Prelate.” I am glad to see that the Prelates are among them, because they should be careful on other days than week days, on which they might have influence upon any possible elections. I have known Prelates make addresses which certainly were intended to have, and probably had, a good deal of influence on elections on particular ques-

tions which were at issue. What is forbidden to a Peer?—

“To concern himself in an election of Members to serve for the Commons House of Parliament.”

What does “concern himself in an election” for any Member of Parliament mean? The noble Lord has said that there has been no recent example of such an interference, and that the House of Commons would certainly, if there had been, have interfered in consequence. There was a Motion made against the interference of Peers in Parliamentary elections on July 11, 1887; and that Motion was founded on this statement, which appeared in *The Times*—

“There seems to be a plentiful supply of carriages on either side, though the Conservatives have the preponderance;”

and among them it was stated that there were several lent to Mr. Aird by Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill—

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I was not a Peer, and I had not a carriage in use.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The noble Lord is acquitted, and he shall not be charged with infringing the liberties of this House. But Lord Salisbury, Lord Rothschild, and other noblemen and gentlemen connected with the Conservative and Unionist Party were mentioned; and on that statement a Motion was founded calling attention to the fact that Peers were concerning themselves with an election. I am not quite sure that the lending of carriages might not have a more potent effect on an election than speeches. I have known many people carried to the poll by carriages, but very few have been carried there by speeches. That Motion was very properly treated by Mr. W. H. Smith, the then Leader of the House, as a matter which the House ought to recognise as immaterial and as absurd, and the Member for Paddington, whose constituency was as near to that one as Leith is to Edinb'urgh—

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I was sitting for it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Do not be in a hurry. The noble Lord treated the Motion as a proposition which was absurd, and laid down an interpretation of the Sessional Order which was, I think, very reasonable. He said—

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“It was not for interference of this kind; it was for the action of Peers in forcing their nominees on the House of Commons, and, before the days of the ballot, in using their territorial influence to force people dependent on them to support their nominees. That was the action of the Peers against which the House of Commons had always protested, and I feel confident that the hon. Members for Northampton and Cockermouth will not seriously argue for a moment that for all legitimate electoral purposes, such as taking an interest in Parliamentary elections, and in supporting within reasonable bounds one side or the other, Peers ought to be prohibited from showing such public interest.”

There is the reading of the Sessional Order by the noble Lord.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I adhere to every word of it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It almost passes the bounds of the ridiculous when we come to the question of the Lord Lieutenant. The Lord Lieutenant may make a speech in the county on election matters. There are some Lord Lieutenants who are scrupulous on that matter; but the particular instance which the noble Lord gave was a very unfortunate one, because the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire came to make a speech against the unfortunate representative of the City of Derby, and, in order to promote the bringing forward of the candidate who was intended, but did not succeed, in turning him out. I will give the noble Lord such an example as will, I think, overthrow his theory as to the reading of the Sessional Order. Lord Lieutenants canvass their own counties in their own interest, and sit as Members of those counties. We have known many of them in this House.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: That is a Commoner. Not if the Lord Lieutenant is a Peer.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Sessional Order says nothing about the Lord Lieutenant being a Peer. It is the Lord Lieutenant *qua* Lord Lieutenant; and I say it is the commonest thing in the world for a man who is Lord Lieutenant, and who is told that he is not to use the authority derived from his commission to influence the election of any Member, yet to use that authority in order to get himself elected. We remember Sir Robert Anstruther in this House, we remember Lord Kensington, we remember Mr. Biddulph, all of whom were Lord Lieutenants of the counties for which they sat. Therefore, this point is

absurd, and if it were necessary to add anything to its absurdity it would be to state that Lord Rosebery is not Lord Lieutenant in the place where he spoke. I am not going to argue upon technical points. We are arguing this question upon very much broader grounds. The noble Lord challenged me on the subject of Lord Beaconsfield's speech at Aylesbury.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: It was an agricultural dinner.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What did it signify what the dinner was? It was in the principal town in the county, where the poll was to take place on the next day, and the noble Lord said the Eastern Question was immaterial, and that it was one in which the farmers would not take an interest. It was, however, the whole question of that election. It was immediately after the agitation had commenced, which was called the "Bulgarian atrocities." I well remember the last speech which that distinguished man made in this House. It was in answer to a speech which I had made, and he disappeared that night from the House of Commons and went to the House of Lords. It was on the 11th of August; and in September, when the Bulgarian atrocity agitation, as it was called, was at its full height, and when the whole country was in a state of ferment about it—that election turned on that question, and on no other—Lord Beaconsfield went to Aylesbury and made a very powerful and an effective speech, which I have not the slightest doubt greatly influenced, and probably decided, that election. Let us, therefore, have no cant in this matter.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: It is not cant.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It would be very extraordinary, and I should be extremely surprised, if the Leader of the Opposition is going back to Edinburgh to say that he endeavoured to persuade his Party to move a Vote of Censure upon Lord Rosebery going last Saturday to Edinburgh, and I should like to know whether he expects that that will advance the Conservative cause in Scotland? I say, Sir, that this is a trumpery proceeding—a proceeding petty and contemptible. I am only delighted if the Unionist Party are going to adopt tactics of this description. I propose myself to

meet that Motion as it was met by Mr. W. H. Smith when it was made on the subject of Lord Salisbury sending his carriages to carry voters to the poll. The noble Lord has said that Leith is so near to Edinburgh, and it is said that a Peer cannot make a speech in St. George's, Hanover Square, when there is an election going on at Greenwich, because Greenwich is in the neighbourhood of London. Is that the doctrine laid down? We shall, as I say, treat this matter as Mr. W. H. Smith did, and I move to omit all the words after the word "that," in order to add "this House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day," so that we may transact some business which will be worthy of the House of Commons.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to end of the Question, in order to add the words "This House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman began his speech by congratulating himself and his Party that we had chosen this subject for our first attack in force upon the Government of which he is a Member. It is perfectly true that we have not hitherto been occupied in attacking the Government. Our function hitherto has been in supporting them; and, so far as my recollection carries me back through the week since my right hon. Friend took Office, it appears to me that it is upon us, and upon us almost alone, that he has had to rely in the critical Parliamentary moments through which he has had to pass. It is a most ungrateful return for the services which we have rendered that he should make this sort of retort upon the Constitutional address of my noble Friend, and that he should make a speech which, though it began jocosely, ended in a storm of fiery indignation, the cause of which I could not very easily fathom. I think my noble Friend has been extremely well advised in bringing before the House of Commons a crucial and critical example by which we may for ever test the doctrine whether a

Peer may or may not take part in Parliamentary elections. If we decide to-night that the action of Lord Rosebery in speaking at Edinburgh during the Leith election was not an action which comes within the fair meaning of the Sessional Order, well and good. Let it henceforth be known that every Peer may do everything he likes, may speak where he likes and when he likes, in regard to any election whatsoever, and that the Sessional Order which we still go through the form of passing at the beginning of each and every Session is not worth the paper upon which it is printed. That doctrine, which will be the result of the decision to which the right hon. Gentleman wants to bring us to-night, may be a good or a bad doctrine, but I maintain that at all events it is a new doctrine. The right hon. Gentleman has taken the trouble to bring forward two precedents on his own side. I will examine those precedents, and bring precedents from the other side. The first and most important precedent to which the right hon. Gentleman referred was the precedent of Lord Beaconsfield in 1876, when he had been raised to the House of Lords, and when, in consequence of his accession to the Peerage, a vacancy was created in his county. Lord Beaconsfield did no doubt go down to speak at an agricultural dinner, as was his wont, while the election consequent upon the vacancy was going on; but was that speech a Party speech? Was it an attempt to interfere with or to influence the election which was going on? The right hon. Gentleman says it was such an interference.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I said it was a Party speech.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : He bases that statement upon the fact that the Bulgarian atrocity agitation was, as he says, at its height, and that no man could speak upon that question without trenching upon Party politics, and without influencing those who had to determine the issue of the election. The right hon. Gentleman's history is at fault. In 1876 the Bulgarian agitation was not at its height. It had begun, but it was not then a question which divided the two great Parties in the State. On the contrary, though the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had no doubt

even at that date taken a very strong line upon the subject, he was not the Leader of the Party, and those who were the Leaders of the Party had not at that time identified themselves with the right hon. Gentleman's views on foreign policy. I am not sure that if we examined the speeches the right hon. Gentleman made at that time we should find he had finally given in his adhesion to the movement which was afterwards headed, with such successful electoral results, by the late Prime Minister. I have not been able to personally verify the fact that I am now going to state to the House, but it has been given to me by a friend in whose accuracy I have perfect confidence. He informs me that at this very meeting the Liberal M.P. for Bucks was in the chair, and that Lord Carrington was present and spoke. "Hear, hear," says the right hon. Gentleman. Why, he knew it! The right hon. Gentleman knew this. [SIR W. HARCOURT : Both candidates were there.] I am sure if the House had known that the right hon. Gentleman knew that—

SIR W. HARCOURT : Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to say that Lord Beaconsfield alluded to the candidates and said, "I hope the best man will win."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : If the right hon. Gentleman never makes a greater Party speech than that when he takes part in a contested election, I am sure we shall be very well satisfied. It is perfectly evident from the facts I have given, from the people who were there, from the character of the speeches, and from the character of those who spoke, that the dinner was really what it professed to be—an agricultural dinner, not a Party meeting, and not one that could by any possibility be said to have been started in connection with Party politics. The next precedent the right hon. Gentleman alluded to was, that in 1886 some carriages of Peers were used at an election in the East of London. Whether it be right or not that carriages should be used in that way, at all events no objection has ever been raised that I know to that course. "But," says the right hon. Gentleman, "if you don't object to carriages, why should you object to speeches? Surely, to carry voters to the poll in a couple of broughams would have

more effect on the result of the election than all the speeches of all the Prime Ministers in the world." I do not know what estimate is formed by gentlemen opposite of Lord Rosebery's oratory. I feel it is not my business to put any electoral valuation upon it. It would be quite out of place, quite out of order, to make any comments upon Saturday's speech—a very interesting attempt to explain the unexplainable, and possibly one which the right hon. Gentleman is right in thinking could not have influenced a vote. Whether his estimate of the actual speech of Lord Rosebery be a sound estimate or not, my objection is not to the particular speech or the particular man, but it is to a man who is a Lord of Parliament, and not merely a Lord of Parliament, but the most important Lord of Parliament now living, inasmuch as he is the First Minister of the Crown, going down to make a speech in a town which the right hon. Gentleman has not attempted to deny cannot be, for electoral purposes, regarded as unconnected with the burgh in which a contest was going on at the time. The right hon. Gentleman has given his precedents and I have dealt with them. I will now give him a precedent on the other side. I am informed that the late Mr. Wardle, Member for Derbyshire, died on February 16, 1892. The present Duke of Devonshire had recently succeeded to the Peerage, and, long previous to Mr. Wardle's death, had fixed a date, that fell during the course of the contest for the vacant seat, as one on which he would receive an address in Derby. The receipt of an address in Derby did not necessarily carry with it a controversial speech, but so anxious was the Duke of Devonshire not to infringe what, until the right hon. Gentleman spoke to-night, we had been in the habit of supposing were our rights—the rights of the House of Commons—that he put off his meeting until a date when the election was over, and when no suspicion could possibly be entertained that he was using his special advantages for making a speech within the county of which he was lord lieutenant at a time when an election was proceeding. If you ask me whether I personally and individually attach very great value to, or am inclined to fight an arduous contest for, these privileges which the right hon.

Gentleman wants to give up, I say it does not appear to me to be a matter of transcendent importance. I confess I watch with astonishment the action of the gentlemen who wish to extend the privileges of the Peerage. I have always supposed up to this time that hon. Gentlemen opposite desired to curtail, not to extend, the privileges of Peers, but I now gather that is not so. I learn from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that he desires to see the whole House of Lords taking an active part in the contests in the various parts of the country with which they are connected. If the right hon. Gentleman desires that, it is not for us to object. The Peers are by their character and position men, in the majority of cases, who naturally have considerable interest in the places where they live. He has told us the majority of the Peers would be desirous of exercising their influence rather on our side than on his. If he wishes to make it easier for them to exercise their influence why should we interfere? This, I think, I ought to add, Lord Rosebery has now convinced us finally that the Sessional Order we pass every time we assemble must be acknowledged to be a farce. Many of us have long suspected it would not hold water; now the thing is conclusively demonstrated. I invite the right hon. Gentleman, as Leader of the House, to put a Motion on the Paper rescinding it, and if he does I shall consider that, at all events, he has acted a consistent and logical part—a part which, whether it be or be not for the dignity of the House, is for our interest as a Party. If there be a general consensus of opinion, that it is desirable to increase the privileges of the House of Lords, and that we must withdraw from the position we have occupied—namely, that Peers must refrain from interfering in elections, we must abandon that doctrine, and henceforth it will be the right, and if the right then, undoubtedly, the duty, of every Lord of Parliament to do what he can to return to this House that candidate who happens to agree with him in general politics.

*SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I do not propose to enter upon the grounds on which this Motion has been made, but rather to discuss it in the spirit displayed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposi-

tion, and to ask the House whether there are not some very broad Constitutional grounds upon which we ought to come to the conclusion that this Sessional Order is obsolete, is unfounded, and should not be put forward as a claim of a privilege we do not possess. This House, no doubt, has some inherent privileges which can control all our actions within the House; it has also some privileges which can control persons out of it. We are a High Court of Parliament. We object to be libelled, and we have inherent power to punish the offenders who are guilty of contempt towards us. But we have no inherent privilege by which we can punish persons by mere Resolution of the House. The right and privilege with regard to contempt does not depend upon Resolution. No Resolution of the House enables us to summon anyone here unless we have a legal right and a right which will be sanctioned by a Court of Law. If we summon the editor of the paper who has libelled this House to the Bar, we can compel him to appear; and if he is brought to the Bar, a Court of Law would say we were justified in our action, because it was alleged he had been guilty of contempt. But such a Resolution as that we are dealing with now is simply inoperative, and there is no power of enforcing it. It is an empty Resolution. If a Member of the House of Peers refuses to come here we cannot bring him here. The old practice was that if we thought a Peer had offended we communicated with the Peers; we made complaint to the Peers to deal with their Member because he had infringed our rights. But it is simply a mere idle form we go through when we declare there has been a Breach of Privilege and yet not be able to enforce any punishment.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I said, "I would not summon him to the Bar."

*SIR H. JAMES: With great respect to the noble Lord, let me say you cannot summon Lord Rosebery to the Bar or anywhere else. We have no remedy. All we can say is that, in our opinion, our Privileges have been broken. I think the House will see there is no substantial ground for saying that the interference of a Peer in an election constitutes a Breach of the Privileges of this House.

In olden times there was a statutory enactment that no great man or other should interfere with the freedom of election. Men with feudal power came to the Court-houses and terrorised their retainers. Against that interference Parliament protested. Then in later times, in 1631, when the Peers of Parliament held boroughs in their hands and wrote letters commanding the return of certain persons, came that protest upon which the Resolution of 1802 was founded, that Peers should not interfere in elections—that is, to the extent of dominating electors so as to prevent the due exercise of their power. Then Peers had such power; now they have not. Interference in elections is either due or undue interference or it is not. If there is undue interference you find your remedy under the law. A Prelate of the Roman Catholic Church lately unduly interfered in an election and the law set him right. The Resolution we pass every year is an obsolete and a meaningless Resolution, and the time will come—next Session, I hope—when the House of Commons will have to say whether the period has not arrived when we should cease altogether to go through this form of protesting without foundation and without having the power to give any effect to our protests. The Resolution does not add to the dignity of the House or to the protection of its Members.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that nothing gave him greater pleasure than to come forward in order to defend the natural and proper rights of Peers, and particularly those of Lord Rosebery. The noble Lord opposite had asked whether this Sessional Order was a reality or a sham. He thought that the noble Lord had realised that not only the Leader of the Opposition, but every other Member in that House, was convinced that the thing was an utter sham. There were many absurdities connected with the House of Commons which he should be glad to see swept away. For instance, at the opening of a Session the Beefeaters were seen walking about the Palace of Westminster with their lanterns, and people were told that under some ancient Order of the House which had not been repealed—because no one had taken the trouble of repealing it—they were looking to see if Guy

Fawkes was to be found upon the premises. The Order which was now under discussion was precisely as absurd and ridiculous as that directing the search for Guy Fawkes. Any Order of the House was absurd when they had no sort of power to give effect to it. The noble Lord had drawn a terrible picture of Peers sweeping through the country and carrying Conservative Members at every election by their resistless eloquence. He was not afraid of this sacred band of 500 Peers appearing on public platforms. What he was afraid of was of Peers using surreptitious influence. If the Peers came out into the open he should be delighted to see them on election platforms; but it was absurd for the noble Lord to contend that when a Peer appeared on a public platform everyone would fall down and worship him, and vote for his candidate.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Does the hon. Gentleman deny my proposition?

MR. LABOUCHERE: What is it?

LORD R. CHURCHILL: That proposition is, that Peers may appear on platforms if the Resolution is done away with.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that he, for one, had not the slightest objection to the Peers appearing on every public platform in the country. He went further than that. Three Members of the Conservative Party had brought in this Session Bills to enable Peers to sit in the House of Commons, and he himself had brought in a similar measure last year. He was in favour of Peers being allowed to sit in the Representative House provided they did not seek to pop out of one House into the other whenever it suited them, but undertook during their lives to give up their right to sit in the other House and to abide their chances of being elected to the Commons at the poll. He did not wish to impose fresh disqualifications upon the Peers, but merely to remove those which at present surrounded them. He wanted them to have the fullest rights that every other citizen of the country possessed—no less and no more.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer always reminded him of the Psalmist because of the vigour with which he attacked a man, turned

his way upside down, and broke him to pieces like a potter's vessel. These qualities had been strikingly exhibited in his reply to the noble Lord. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the Motion was contemptible—a Motion, be it observed, which affirmed one of the most solemn of the Sessional Orders passed at the beginning of each Session of the House. The right hon. Gentleman had also said that sending carriages to elections was of more importance than Lord Rosebery's speech—in other words, that one Rosebery was not worth more than one or two broughams. He wondered what the admirers of the Prime Minister would say to that. The only explanation or defence that had been put forward for the appearance of Lord Rosebery at Edinburgh was that the meeting had been planned long before the election was expected. In that case the plan ought to have been altered, and Lord Rosebery ought to have pursued the same honourable course that the Duke of Devonshire had done, who, finding that an election was coming on at the time fixed for him to address a meeting, excused himself from attending the meeting on that ground. It was now said that the Sessional Order had no validity and ought not to exist. The Conservatives had heard that with pleasure. If the Sessional Order forbidding Peers to interfere at elections were dropped the Conservatives would gain ten to one by the change, for there were 10 Conservative Peers to one Liberal. Therefore, when the next Session arrived, the question would arise whether they should any longer continue this Sessional Order, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had described as nothing less than a sham.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, that his right hon. Friends the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Bury had treated the matter as being of really no great importance, and in that he agreed with them. He, however, should wish to guard himself against going the lengths of the doctrine that had been laid down by the right hon. Gentlemen. In former times, no doubt, there had existed a jealousy on the part of the House of Commons of Peers interfering in Parliamentary elections; and although Peers could not be summoned at the Bar of the House, and although a

Message to the House of Lords complaining of the conduct of their Members might be illusory, the House of Commons in days gone by had complete control of the matter in their own hands, because they determined, through their Election Committees, whether an election was a good or a bad one. There might be a question whether an Election Petition could not even now be presented against an election, in case of a Peer having exercised direct influence over an election. He regarded Lord Rosebery's speech at Edinburgh as perfectly immaterial; but if the noble Earl had gone into the Leith Burghs and had appeared upon the platform side by side with Mr. Munro-Ferguson during the election, and had made a speech, that would have been an interference with the election which, in the event of Mr. Munro-Ferguson being returned, a Committee of the House of Commons in the old days might have held justified them in setting aside the election. In these circumstances, the House ought not too hastily to give up the power which they possessed in this matter, for the Courts of Law, following the old Common Law doctrine of the ineligibility of Peers to interfere in elections, might void an election so affected.

LORD R. CHURCHILL said, he hailed with pleasure the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin, that there was a protection in the Common Law against the interference of Peers in elections. He did not intend to press his Motion.

*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, that mention had been made of the historic occasion on which Lord Beaconsfield addressed the Agricultural Association of Bucks. He happened to have been present at the dinner, and he would tell the House what occurred there. It was perfectly correct to say that the Member for the county, Mr. Lambert, was in the chair; but in his opening remarks he said it was the practice to exclude political matters on such occasions, and he hoped that that practice would be observed on that occasion. Lord Carrington replied to the toast of the House of Lords, and adhered most strictly to the rule excluding politics from the dinners of the Agricultural Society. Later on the toast of the Prime Minister was given, and Lord Beaconsfield replied. He said he would certainly not break the

rule by introducing politics, and he was sure the company did not wish him to break it. At that there was much cheering, and Lord Beaconsfield asked, did the cheering indicate that the company desired him to talk about politics, which was replied to by still louder cheering. Lord Beaconsfield then proceeded to deal with political topics; and if Lord Carrington's features were any evidence of his feelings, he certainly regarded Lord Beaconsfield's action as a breach of the ruling of the chairman.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Does the Government intend to do anything about the Standing Order?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: If the House passes to the Orders of the Day, that expresses the opinion of the House on the matter.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, it does not.

Resolved, That this House do now proceed with the Orders of the Day.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYÉS IN THE DOCKYARDS.—RESOLUTION.

*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) rose to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Government do pay in the Royal Dockyards and other naval establishments wages equivalent to the Trades Union rates of wages as are generally accepted as current in each trade, either of the district or of districts, where the work performed is of analogous character."

In moving that Amendment it would be necessary at the outset that he should refer to the Amendment which was moved on the corresponding occasion last year by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge. That Amendment was accepted by the Government, and had it been ad-

Mr. Courtney

ministered in the spirit in which they were led to think it would be, his Motion would not to-day have been necessary. That Amendment provided that—

“No person should, in Her Majesty’s naval establishments, be engaged at wages insufficient for a proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours, wages, insurance against accident, provision for old age, &c., should be such as to afford an example to private employers throughout the country.”

The Government, when accepting that Amendment, clearly defined their position, and he would quote from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War, who was the mouthpiece of the Government on that occasion. He said—

“With regard to the question of setting an example, we mean the Government should show themselves to be amongst the best employers in the country,”

and that—

“They should be in the first flight of employers.”

The right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

“I accept in the fullest sense the principle that the terms of Government employment should be beyond reproach.”

Now, with regard to the question of hours, he had very little to say, as he understood the Government had practically decided to concede in the naval establishments, as well as in the military establishments, a 48 hours week; but it was with regard to wages he wished to address his remarks more especially. He understood the declaration of the Government, through the Secretary of State for War, to mean Trades Union wages. During the Debate several speakers defined, or expressed it as being their opinion, that that would be the necessary corollary. The right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Amendment also made it plain that that would be the natural result; and although some of them at the time took exception to the wording of the right hon. Gentleman’s Amendment, yet, after the expression of the intention of the Government by the Secretary of State for War, they felt that there was no doubt as to what the effect would be. He would like to refer, in passing, to a few reasons which he thought would justify him in requiring that the Government should grant Trades Union rates of pay in their naval establishments. He did not know that he was correct in

assuming that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Poplar, in the Motion which he moved, and which was unanimously accepted by the House in 1891, meant to convey that the Government should pay the Trades Union rate of wages, but it certainly laid down that the Government contractors should pay rates of wages which before then they had not been in the habit of paying. The London County Council, at the outset of its career, endeavoured to grapple with the question of wages, and they at first laid down that “fair wages” should be paid. But they soon found out that their contractors managed to evade the paying of just wages, and, therefore, they resorted to the expedient of making a definite condition in all their contracts that contractors should pay the Trades Union rate of wages. But they went further, for they drew up a schedule of rates which should prevail within a radius of 20 miles of Charing Cross. Every contractor who undertook work under the Council was bound to specify that he intended to maintain these rates, which were the Trades Union rates of pay. He had only to refer, to show the feeling throughout the country on this matter, to the resolutions which had been passed unanimously at the last two Trades Union Congresses; at the one held in Glasgow, and, more recently, the one at Belfast. There were other reasons. The first was that the Government itself was the largest employer of labour in the land, its employment amounting, approximately, to 250,000 *employés*, and it, therefore, should set a good example. Secondly, the Government was not subject to the competition of private employers. He was quite aware that it had to conserve the interests of the taxpayers, but it was not subject to that pressing competition, which might be some sort of excuse to a private employer for not giving the fullest and most liberal wages. Then there was another reason. The Government exercised, naturally, over its *employés* a greater amount of dominance than could a private employer, and where the dominance was greater so there should be the consideration also greater. Further than these reasons, the working classes were in favour of the Government setting a good example, and, as they were the largest taxpayers, that

should remove any hesitancy that the Government might feel in coming to a decision favourable to the terms of his Amendment. In due course, after the declaration of the Government, they had a scheme presented to them which was intended to fulfil the undertaking they gave on that occasion, and he would like to thank them for what they had done and the concessions they had made, but he was sorry not to be able to congratulate them on having carried out to the full the undertaking they gave a year ago on an occasion similar to the present. When the scheme was presented to them there was a long Debate in the House on it, and the general consensus of opinion was that it did not satisfy the conditions of the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment; and, whatever it might have done, it certainly did not satisfy those laid down by him as regarded wages. Several of the Members who took part in that Debate gave expression to the opinion that the only solution for the discontent that prevailed was to introduce Trade Union wages. That opinion was not confined to Members on this side of the House. He might mention amongst these Members the Member for Preston, who expressed himself in favour of Trades Union rates of wages, subject to notice being taken of the privileges which Government *employés* possessed.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, what he did say was that he was willing that the Trades Union system should be adopted, but that the Motion did not provide for the privileges of Government *employés* being taken into consideration.

MR. KEARLEY pointed out that his Amendment provided for that. He only asked that these men should receive an equivalent of the Trades Union wages. But there were other hon. Members on the other side who expressed themselves favourable to the Trades Union wages. Amongst them he might mention the hon. Member for Belfast, who was so largely connected with the shipbuilding industry, and who was so great an authority on the subject. His hon. Friend the Civil Lord of the Admiralty claimed that the various rates of pay had been fixed in accordance with local rates. He took exception to that, and he thought he succeeded in proving that in many cases no local comparison could be made, and that, moreover, where there

were Trades Union rates in a locality they were considerably higher than those paid inside the yards. His hon. Friend the Civil Lord claimed that the Government, with the assistance of a Departmental Committee, had fixed the rates of pay on the basis of local comparison, and that they had the advantage of the services of Mr. Burnett, the Labour Correspondent to the Board of Trade. He (Mr. Kearley) had taken exception to the composition of that Committee; and he said that while Mr. Burnett was no doubt a sympathetic member in the interests of labour, the rest of the Committee was composed of Admiral Superintendents, Staff Captains, and Admiralty private secretaries, and was not a fair tribunal to make inquiries, but that it should have included certainly some representatives of this House and of the men themselves, so that they might have been able to clear up any of the points which must have been raised during the inquiry. At the end of the Debate the Civil Lord promised to receive any information or evidence that he (Mr. Kearley) might be able to lay before him. They laid information before him, but they had no evidence that that information had any influence on the decision of the Admiralty towards enabling them to arrive at what they desired—namely, the Trades Union rate of wages. It was in the interest of the Government that this continual agitation should be avoided. Its cessation would have the effect of a saving of Parliamentary time, and, in addition, it would serve the country very largely by making the workmen more contented. The service of the State would be more attractive, and the Government would then sweep into their employment the very cream of the workmen of the country. He would like to give some details of the rates of pay prevailing, in order to support his contention. It was arranged under the new scheme that the unskilled labourers should receive a minimum wage of 19s. per week. He would not dilate upon the probational periods which were complained of, as he understood they had been abolished. But, as regarded pay, it was decided that at the establishments at Woolwich and Deptford the rate of wages should be 20s. a week in consideration of the rent conditions there being altogether different from anything in other

parts of the country where the Government had establishments. He was not going to complain that the 20s. at Deptford and Woolwich was too much; but when they were told, as they were told, by the Civil Lord that this decision was made on account of the rent conditions prevailing there, he thought he was fully entitled to prove that the rent conditions which prevailed at Devonport were altogether worse than those which existed at Deptford and Woolwich. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Forwood) smiled. He knew he was sceptical about this; but he would not ask the Committee to take his bare word on the subject. He would read an extract from the Census Returns which were published quite recently. Under the heading of "Percentage of Population in Overcrowded Tenements" the Report pointed out the highest and lowest percentages respectively. In Gateshead the percentage was 40·7; Newcastle-on-Tyne, 35·8; Sunderland, 32·85; and fourth on the list of the towns of England came Plymouth with 26·27. Plymouth, of course, as the House was aware, included Devonport. At the very bottom of the list was Portsmouth with 1·74. The Report made special observations on the difference between two such apparently similar towns as Portsmouth and Plymouth, and said that possibly local knowledge might account for the difference. The explanation was the system of land tenure, which at Devonport was such that the bulk of the houses were let in weekly tenements, which were densely overcrowded, as many as 12 families living in a single house. The Census Returns went on to give the number of tenements of less than five rooms, and, according to this, the condition of Devonport was worse than London. In all England and Wales there were 47 per 1,000 dwellings of one room only. In London there were 184 per 1,000 of this class, while Plymouth had no less than 244 per 1,000, being the only large town in England with a higher ratio than London. This proved that the rent conditions in Devonport were such as entitled the men to, at all events, the same consideration as was given to the men at Woolwich and Deptford. Then he came to the local rate of wages as the standard. Deptford, as a matter of fact, was the geographical

centre of London, and he was informed that the employers in London paid 6d. per hour, while the London County Council paid a minimum rate of 24s. per week; therefore, if they were to be governed by local considerations, the rate at Deptford should be about 24s. per week, but it was fixed by the Government at 20s. per week for unskilled labour. At Devonport the rate as fixed between the Master Builders Association and the labourers was 5d. per hour, which, at 54 hours per week, gave about 22s. 6d. per week. This reduced to dockyard hours—namely, 51 hours—would mean 21s. per week. Without going into detail, he might say that the recent Annual Report of the Medical Officer at Devonport as to overcrowding and the insanitary conditions which prevailed was very unpleasant reading. There was a large body of men engaged in the dockyards, who were described as skilled labourers, who were engaged at such work as rivetting, iron casting, drilling, &c., and who, if they were employed in private yards, would be classified by trades. The standard rate of wages for these men was 21s. a week, and there was introduced among them the objectionable probation period. For one year the men were probationers, and only received 20s. a week instead of 21s. It was stated that the rate of pay to skilled labourers rose by a graduated scale from 21s. to 27s. per week, but, if they examined the true facts, what did they find? They found that no less than 75 per cent. were in receipt of wages at the rate of 22s. per week and under. As an illustration of the way in which skilled labourers were treated, he held in his hand a specimen of the work performed by one of these so-called skilled labourers at Devonport, who was engaged in setting up from manuscript and machining the printed instructions put on ammunition cases. He not only set up type from manuscript, but made ready the machines; and he (Mr. Kearley) did not know that he could give a more forcible argument than that as to the unfair rate of payment of these men employed under the term of "skilled labourers." The Trades Union rate of pay in the locality for this work was 30s. per week. In London it was 38s. What he contended was that these men should enjoy a minimum rate of 6d. per hour.

Before going into the question of the mechanics' wages, he would once more refer to the question that had been debated at great length on many occasions in the House, and which, he was sure, interested many hon. Gentlemen, and that was the subject of classification in the dockyards. He hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman the late Solicitor General (Sir E. Clarke) would bear his testimony as to the apprehensions of the men in regard to the amended scheme which had been set up by the Government, and which professed to abolish the detestable system of classification. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty, in dealing with the question of classification, had made some very strong remarks; and if he (Mr. Kearley) read a few of these to the House, he should be able to put before the Committee in a nutshell what classification was, and the feeling that existed in relation to it amongst the workmen. The hon. Member said—

"I come now to the second great question with which we have to deal. I allude to the burning, and I may say blazing, question of classification. I do not know if hon. Members know what classification is. Classification means that members of a trade are sub-divided into classes, and receive different rates of wages, the selection and classification being made by the dockyard officials on the grounds of economy, ability, and service. Mr. Forwood, in 1891, introduced the system into certain trades in which it was previously unknown, but the right hon. Gentleman could never have anticipated the effect which it would produce. The outcry against the system was instantaneous, and it had been continuous. The objections made are, that men employed on precisely the same work, and producing precisely the same results, get different rates of wages. They say it may be that a better man, producing better results, gets the lowest rate of wages, whilst an inferior man, producing inferior results, obtains the higher rate. The men say that the system opens the door to favouritism on the part of the Superintendents, and, of course, the mere suggestion of such a thing is most objectionable. They say there is no system of the kind in similar trades in private yards. In my opinion, there is a substantial justification for the line these men have taken. And over and above everything else you have this fact: that the men are prejudiced against the system of payment, and are utterly discontented with it. If you are going to have peace in the dockyards you must do away with the system of classification. However perfect the theoretical system may be, there is no good in forcing even the most perfect theoretical system down the throats of men. We have, therefore, decided to put an end to the system of classification."

Mr. Kearley

That was a very good decision if it had been acted upon; but the Government had not only not abolished classification, they had revived it in many ways, and had allowed all the glaring inequalities to continue to exist. He would give them one illustration. The most powerful trade in the yard, numerically speaking, was that of shipwrights. Under the present system the established shipwrights had four rates of pay—31s., 32s., 32s. 6d., and 33s. Under the new scheme which came into operation in April, which professed to abolish classification, 32s. was put as the standard to which all men below it were to be raised. But new men coming in were not put on the establishment at 32s.—the standard rate—but for some reason which he could not fathom they were put on the establishment at 31s. 6d. per week. Thus there would be two rates of pay. But, in addition to this, there were many who would be in receipt of rates of pay higher than the standard, and it had been decided that those who were in the enjoyment of higher rates than the standard should continue to enjoy them. The result was, that there would be two more rates—one 32s. 6d. and the other 33s.; therefore, we had arrived at this result—that the upshot of the agitation was that the Government declared that they had abolished classification; but when the facts were analysed, it was found that there were four rates of pay, and so the outcome was practically the same. Precisely the same thing applied to the hired men, with the exception that whereas in their case there were at present four rates of pay, in the future there would continue to be three rates, and so all the old objections would remain in free force. What the men claimed was clearly expressed by his hon. Friend's statement—

"That as they were members of the same trade they should be in the enjoyment of the same rates of pay."

Every one of these men had served an apprenticeship of at least seven years, and every single man had had to pass, to the satisfaction of the Government officials, a practical examination and practical test with his tools before he was allowed to be enrolled at all in the Government service. Now he would say a few words with regard to the justice of the rates of pay. The Trades Union average for the past 10 years for shipwrights in Trades

Union yards where Government contracts were executed, working 54 hours a week, was 37s. 6d., and those figures worked out at 51 hours, which were dockyard hours, at 35s. 6d. per week in the Government establishments. Instead of that, the average paid during the whole of the 10 years to established shipwrights in Her Majesty's yards had been at the rate of 30s. 6d. a week. And seeing the very large divergence between the rates of pay current in private yards, where precisely the same work was going on and where Government ships were being built by contract, he would point out it was scarcely a fair comparison to make between shipwrights in the Government employment and shipwrights in private yards, for this reason—that the men employed by Government had not to work in wood alone, but to adapt themselves to the new conditions, and work in iron as well as wood. In private yards the shipwright was a worker in wood alone, those men who were workers in iron being termed iron-shipbuilders, and having a much higher rate of pay. The same thing applied to shipjoiners. The Trades Union rates for shipjoiners throughout the country was substantially the same as shipwrights. But during the past 10 years the Government workmen had been in receipt of 29s. 6d. per week. He took occasion, a week or two ago, to make a trip round to several dockyards, and took the opportunity to inspect the quality of the work done by joiners in Government employment. He must say it was work of a very high character, and he failed to see why its value should not be recognised. He noticed that they were engaged in panelling expensive woods, and in carving in the Admiral's and Commander's saloons, also in turning out tables, chairs, sideboards, and other articles in an excellent manner. He had stronger arguments to urge, if necessary, against their existing rate of pay. His hon. Friend had urged that in all cases local rates of pay were always taken into consideration. He failed to see why these men should not be entitled to receive a wage equivalent to that prevailing in private yards where precisely the same work was carried on, but the local rate of pay of joiners employed in the building trade in the neighbourhood of Devonport and Portsmouth was 7½d. per

hour. That was the Trades Union rate of pay for 54 hours per week. This would give at dockyard hours 31s. 6d. per week, but the Government men only received 29s. There were many trades where there were no local rates, and for these men he urged there should be a comparison drawn as to the rate of pay prevailing in the districts, where work of an analagous character was performed, so that they should have a rate equivalent to the work they did. But there were other trades strictly local in character which he would quote. The local Trades Union rate of pay for carpenters was 32s. per week, computed on a basis of 51 hours per week. The carpenters in the works department got a rate of pay ranging from 22s. to 27s. a week. Take masons, again—precisely the same thing applied. The Trades Union rate of wages for masons was 32s. per week. The rate of pay in the works department ranged from 22s. to 27s. per week. He might go on to mention many other trades, but he thought he had spoken enough to prove his contention that the rates of pay in the dockyards did not compare with the rates of pay prevailing in the localities, and that the rates of pay for men where there was no local comparison did not compare with the Trades Union rates in the shipbuilding yards where Government work was put out to contract. Now, he wanted to make one or two observations with regard to the systems which prevailed in Government dockyards. These systems would not be tolerated by any Trades Union body of men in private yards. In the first place, men were called upon to work on piece work, but it would be scarcely credited that these men had no knowledge whatever of the prices at which their work was assessed and valued. He had noticed in the Government statement that for the future this was to be abolished. It had been protested against year after year, but men were still forced to work on terms and scales of pay which were concealed from them altogether. He had stated all this to his hon. Friend, who said it should be altered at once. The hon. Member said that seven months ago, but it had not been altered yet. One would have thought that the Government would have taken immediate steps to have had this simple act of justice done to their

own *employés*. But he was satisfied by his hon. Friend's statement, that in the future there would be no further cause for complaint. Then there was the system of check measurement, which was this: men were compelled to work at piecework rates of speed, but were not paid at the piecework rates of pay. They were harassed by the measurer perpetually coming round and taking stock of their work, and, after all this, it frequently happened that at the end of the week, instead of keeping up their weekly standard rate of pay, they were what was called "checked," and had to accept several shillings less than their standard rate of pay. He had become a convert to the view that piecework in Government establishments ought to be discontinued. [*Cries of "Why?"*] He would tell them why. At the present moment there were mechanics in many yards working at piecework. Of course, they put forth a supreme effort, encouraged by the prospect of earning more money, but the labourers, who by reason of the scanty pay they received could not have too much stamina, were on day pay. These day labourers, who had to wait upon these mechanics and could not feed themselves very highly on a wage of 19s. a week, were expected to work, if he might use the expression, "full steam ahead," but they were not entitled to receive any additional benefit for their enhanced energy. Then there was the question of systematic overtime. The latest statement which had been put before the House of Commons, if he might say so, was very ingeniously contrived in view of the charges which had recently taken place. It promised the rectification of many of these abuses of which they had complained. It said that—

"Pressure is to be met, when practicable, by entering additional men, and by employing night shifts in preference to resorting to overtime."

That decision had been arrived at at a very significant moment. Over and over again they had contended that the systematic overtime which had been worked for the past two or three years was discreditable to the Government and most hurtful to the health of the men. The constitutions of the men were being wrecked and shattered by the fearfully long hours they were working. And all the while those men

were being compelled to work time and a-half or time and three-quarters they had thousands of men in the country who were unemployed and were starving for the want of work, and yet the Government had not opened their doors to take in a sufficient number of workmen to perform the vast accumulation of work on hand. It was not a question of mere temporary pressure. It had been going on for the last two or three years, and from his knowledge of the dockyards he was perfectly well aware that the torpedo and machine shops would be compelled to continue working overtime unless better machinery were introduced and more men employed in the works. He therefore entered his protest against this system of overtime, and unless his hon. Friends would give some assurance that they really meant what they said in their statement, it would be found when next year came round that overtime was still existing as it had been for the last two or three years. His hon. Friend the Member for Preston had made a remark just now as to how he would regard Trades Union rates of pay, and had referred to the privileges of the Government *employés*. With regard to those privileges, 25 per cent. of the men were receiving pensions, and each man gave from his wages what was computed as being equivalent to half the amount of the pension provided by the Government. The "establishment," as it was called, was not brought into existence at the request of the men, but because the Government wanted to make sure that in time of war or difficulty it would have a firm control over a certain set of men in its employment. But, whatever the advantages of Government employment were, he contended that they should be actuarially computed and their exact value ascertained. His Amendment simply asked that, after having taken into consideration the value of these privileges, then the Trades Union rates of wages should prevail. In addition to pensions, the men had four days' holiday—Good Friday, Christmas Day, Coronation Day, and Queen's Birthday—but they were not worth anything more than 6d. per week. Then, as to hurt pay, it was right to remind the House that until the last Employers' Liability Bill was before the House the

Mr. Kearley

Government *employés* were always excluded from the benefits of all preceding Acts. Naturally, then, it was necessary that some provision should be made to compensate those who suffered injury in the Government service. It was urged that the men in Government employment continued at work in the slips, being sheltered from the weather, whereas in private yards men were subject to suspension on account of bad weather, and so on. But many ships were now being built outside the slips, and the men were exposed to all sorts of weather. He had seen men at work on the new ship the *Majestic* the other day under those conditions.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, with extra pay.

*MR. KEARLEY said, the men could hardly be expected to work without pay. That was why he said the argument was not fair that the men continued at work. Take the case of the building of a battleship. How long was it after the keel was laid until at least one deck was covered in? It was not right to urge that the men had continuous work irrespective of weather in the Government dockyards, but that men in private yards had not the same privilege. In conclusion, he desired to thank the House for the patient hearing they had accorded him. He was quite aware that it was not an attractive subject—[Admiral FIELD: Hear, hear!]
—especially to naval Members, who had axes of their own to grind.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) objected to any imputation being made that naval officers had axes to grind.

MR. KEARLEY hoped the Admiralty would see its way to accepting his Amendment. If it were accepted, a Committee should be appointed to ascertain how the rates paid in the Government dockyards compared with those in private yards where Government work of a precisely similar class was actually being carried out.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport), in seconding the Resolution, said, after the long and exhaustive speech which his hon. Friend had just delivered, he would not trouble the House long. He urged upon the Admiralty and upon the Government the extreme importance of carrying out their promise with regard

to notices being put up in the shops. Some of the minor trades in the yards were even worse paid than the others in proportion to the rates of wages paid in similar trades at other works. For instance, riggers, according to the Government scale, were paid 25s. 6d. a week for establishment men and 27s. a week for hired men; whereas he could not find that anywhere else riggers were paid less than 30s. a week, even in Belfast, where he understood the rate of wages was lower than in any other city in the United Kingdom.

MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said, the hon. Member was entirely mistaken in saying that.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON was saying that, taking trades all round, the rates of wages in Belfast were lower than anywhere else. That would operate, of course, indirectly on the shipbuilding trade. In some of the ports wages were up to as high as 42s. per week. In another small trade, the sailmakers, the wages paid in the Government dockyards were 25s. 6d. for the establishment men and 27s. for the hired men, and again, in comparison, in private yards the rates ran up from 30s. to 40s. a week. Passing on to the minor skilled trades classed as skilled labourers, they had one grievance which his hon. Friend had not mentioned. These were described as separate trades. In particular, he would mention the hand-trimmers, who were paid, under the Government scale of wages, from 20s. to 22s. a week, whereas the lowest wages he could find paid them in private yards was 24s., running up to 39s. a week. That was an enormous difference, and was an instance of the result of minor trades being classified as skilled labourers in the Government dockyards. For shipwrights in the various shipbuilding districts where the hours were in some cases less than those worked in the Government dockyards the least wage paid was 36s., as against 33s. for the hired men in the latter. As regarded the ordinary labourers, he and his hon. Friends were met with the argument, in comparing rates of wages, that rents were higher in northern than in southern districts. But he believed it was the case that in the town of Devonport a room could not be obtained for less than 4s. 6d. a week.

That represented a condition of things as bad as could be found even in London, and was, of course, due to the abominable system of land tenure. In that regard, therefore, he could assure hon. Members that a grievance existed in that district as bad as could be found anywhere in Ireland or the East End of London. Dr. May, the Medical Officer of Health, said in his Report, speaking of the houses of the working classes, that the rents were far too high to admit of but one family occupying them, although so planned as to give proper accommodation for only one family; and he went on to mention cases of 10 families living in a single house, and even more than one in a single room; adding that such habitations were the plague-spots of a town, and were centres of disease. He further said that in many instances cases of infectious disease were found where the patients were kept in crowded rooms—cases which certainly should have been isolated. That was something to take into consideration with the fact that wages in the South of England were commonly lower than in the North. But the real reason for the existing low rate of wages among the ordinary labourers employed in Government dockyards was that they were mostly pensioned men—they had earned those rewards for previous public service. He wished to press on the House what he regarded as a matter of extreme importance. It should be recognised that when a man was receiving a pension he had earned it by work already done; and that the rate of wages offered by the Government to those men in any subsequent employment ought not to be fixed upon any scale in which the pensions were taken into account. That was a matter of extreme importance to the inhabitants of whole districts, because the fact of men having received only 16s. 6d. a week as labourers and now only 19s.—the fact that that wage was so small was owing to the circumstance that the men were pensioners, and the fixing of a wage so small lowered the whole rate of wages in the district for that employment. He therefore trusted the Government would get out of the rut into which previous Governments had fallen in this matter, and would boldly say that in future they would not take pensions into account in fixing rates of wages.

Mr. E. J. C. Morton

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"In the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Government do pay in the Royal dockyards and other Naval establishments wages equivalent to the trades unions' rates of wages as are generally accepted as current in each trade, either of the district or of districts, where the work performed is of analogous character,"—(*Mr. Kearley*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (*Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee*) said, before he dealt with the speeches of the hon. Members who had spoken or with the object of the Amendment, which was to issue a new instruction to the Admiralty with regard to labour in the dockyards, he would remind the House that the Admiralty were already acting upon two former instructions of the Government, and he was sure it was not the desire of the House that they should keep adding to the existing instructions unnecessarily. The House had passed two instructions recently, one last year and one in 1891; and the conclusion at which he should wish the House to arrive was that it was not desirable to multiply instructions needlessly. That of last year laid down that no one was to be engaged on wages insufficient for proper maintenance, and that the conditions as to wages and insurance against accidents were to be such as to prevent abuses arising. Every effort was to be made to secure the payment of such wages as were generally accepted as current in similar trades in the district.

**MR. KEARLEY* asked when that Motion was accepted?

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, that was the Motion of 1891, accepted before the present Administration came into Office. It was not applicable in terms to work done under the Admiralty. If his hon. Friend had proposed to make it so applicable he certainly would not have had a word to say against it, because they regarded that principle as binding upon them just as much as it could be on any other Department. The instruction of 1891 was directed against sweating and subletting. He

would formulate the rule followed at the Admiralty thus—and he had the authority of the First Lord for so formulating it. The Rule of the Admiralty was that the remuneration of their workmen should not be inferior, taking everything into consideration, to that of outside workmen in analogous employment, and that if it could be shown that in any trade men were receiving less than they ought to receive, it was the duty of the Department to supplement that wage. Allusion had been made to the Return, showing how far the Admiralty had gone under the existing instructions. The revised scheme provided for the ultimate abolition of classification, and it added last year the sum of £38,512 to the wages paid to dockyard men. His hon. Friend talked as if by doing this they considered they had exhausted their measures; but he protested against this being assumed to be a complete discharge of the obligations of the Department under the instructions. At the present moment there were before the Department 154 Petitions from all classes of workmen in the yards, raising probably every question that had now been mentioned in the House. In the consideration of these hon. Members might rest assured that all they had said would not be neglected. The hon. Member who had moved the Amendment would not expect him to go into the various figures which he had placed before them that evening for the first time.

MR. KEARLEY remarked that the hon. Gentleman had received a deputation the other day upon the question.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, the views of the deputation should be considered along with the views of the other petitioners. Much that the hon. Member had said would have been more *à propos* upon the Estimates. The Admiralty paid in the Royal Dockyards and other naval establishments wages equivalent to the current Trades Union rates. The Resolution as it stood was meaningless, and would have to be recast if it was to be adopted. The hon. Member asked them to enforce what he called the Trades Union rates paid in analogous trades in the locality; but the Mover had himself destroyed the possibility of adopting the local Trade Union rates of wages. A Report by the Labour Department of the Board of Trade on the

rates of wages in the dockyard districts showed that in every case the mean rate was lower than that paid in the dockyards. Cabinetmakers, for example, had from 29s. to 42s. in the dockyards, and outside 30s. to 40s. for 54 hours a week, 50 hours forming a week in the dockyards. Moulders in the dockyards had from 32s. to 42s., and outside from 32s. to 38s., also for a 54 as against a 50 hours week. The Trades Union rate of wages was very well for County Councils or other large Local Bodies to adopt for their own locality; but it was a very different matter when establishments over the whole country had to be dealt with, ranging from Devonport to the Orkneys. His hon. Friend was proposing to introduce a new criterion and standard for dockyard wages, but had he satisfied himself that the dockyard men wanted that standard? Out of the 154 Petitions they had sent in, how many did he suppose asked for the Trades Union rate of wages? Only three. Some labourers at Sheerness asked also for Trades Union wages. He thought that the House, which had not yet lost its caution in dealing with public interests, would pause before adopting this Motion. The adoption of the Union rate might have the effect in some cases of actually lowering wages. No Trade Union could maintain a level of wages always; powerful as Trades Unions were they were subject to reduction in times of depression, as he could show if time permitted. Then, if they were going to introduce Union rates at all, he hoped the House would consider the proposal of the Member for Battersea. He was alluding to the proposal that all dockyard privileges and peculiarities should be swept away, and that a plain, straightforward, ordinary market wage on Trade Union lines should be given. [*Cheers.*] He was glad to find that received with favour on both sides of the House as the logical way of introducing the Trade Union criterion. He did not believe the House would do it by piecemeal. If they did it at all they would do it on broad lines, and he was sure they would first of all consult the men. There might be good reasons for the men preferring the present system, and there were good reasons, too, why it was of advantage to the Government, for it enabled them to keep together a great

Civil army upon which, not less than upon the military, the prosperity of the country depended. The hon. Member for Devonport seemed to make very light of the value of the permanence of dockyard employment. He regarded it as of incalculable value, of inestimable value. What the workman's family thought of was not so much the weekly rate but the annual income actually earned by him. Many questions had still to be considered. There was one great question of surpassing interest. Last year the War Office decided to introduce the eight hours day, or 48 hours week, in its various establishments. Last week the Secretary of State declared to the House the satisfactory results already assured, or likely to be obtained, from the new system. The Admiralty had watched the progress of this great experiment with the keenest interest and sympathy. The naval establishments were not in all respects similar to the arsenals, and their normal hours of labour were already below those of the arsenals, and in fact very little above the standard of the eight hours day. The Admiralty had considered the whole question on the light of the instruction received from the House of Commons, and had decided to introduce the normal 48 hours week in the naval establishments. Some little time would be required for the consideration of the proposed scheme. The conditions of the yards varied on several points, and it would be necessary to look carefully into the details. The Admiralty expected to be able to adopt a scheme on the lines of that established by the War Office, with such modifications as might be necessary to meet the special circumstances of the various dockyards. He trusted the House would be satisfied that they had interpreted its instructions at once accurately and liberally, and that it was not necessary or desirable to add another instruction at the present time.

SIR J. GORST said, he entirely agreed with the Civil Lord of the Admiralty that the Amendment was a very narrow one; and if it had become the main question he should have endeavoured to have broadened its area with regard to the hours of labour in the dockyards. The announcement of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, however, had rendered superfluous both the Amendment and the addition to it which he had intended to propose.

Mr. E. Robertson

He must say the announcement the hon. Member had made was perfectly satisfactory. He could not say he thought the Admiralty were under two instructions from the House, for the instruction of 1891, to which the Civil Lord of the Admiralty referred, was an instruction with reference to contractors only. It was an instruction specially given in consequence of the revelations of the Sweating Commission, and it was a Resolution intended to prevent the Public Departments, in contracts they made outside, giving countenance in any way to under-paid labour. The Admiralty had adopted it as an instruction to themselves entirely of their own accord. The statement which the hon. Member read out was a statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty as to the interpretation to be put on his own policy. It was a perfectly sound one, and as long as the Admiralty and the other Departments of the Government continued to act in a spirit of that kind the persons they employed had no just ground of complaint. The hon. Member had been able to add the concession which the Admiralty were prepared to make about the hours of labour in the dockyards. They must congratulate him on being the Minister of the Crown who had arrived at that extremely just, and, he thought, extremely satisfactory conclusion. The Government ought, in his humble opinion, to set an example to other employers of labour. Every week they found large employers reducing the hours of their men, and it was only right and desirable that Her Majesty's Government should take part in this movement, which was a general one throughout the country. In fact, they should lead the way in limiting the hours of labour to such as the men could work without injury to their health, and which gave them a sufficient amount of leisure. It was most satisfactory to hear the report the Secretary for War was able to give them as to the effect of this movement in the arsenals, and he was very glad indeed that the Board of Admiralty had found themselves able to carry the same principle into effect in the dockyards. It was quite possible that henceforth workmen who were employed regularly in the dockyards, for short and reasonable hours, when they found themselves at the age which had hitherto been the age

of superannuation, and at which men had found themselves exhausted and unfit for work, would be strong enough to continue for a time in the Government service. He would suggest to the Civil Lord that when proposing that 48 hours should be worked in the dockyards, the Government should raise the age at which compulsory superannuation of the workmen should take place. A man was now superannuated at the age of 60, but it was quite conceivable that under the new Regulations, and when the hours of labour were shorter, a man on attaining the age of 60 might find himself in a very much stronger and more robust condition than he did at present. The arrangement he proposed, therefore, would be an extremely advantageous thing for the men themselves, who very often wanted to continue their employment after attaining the age of 60; and, from a public point of view, it would be a great advantage to have the service of able and experienced men for some time after reaching the age of 60. It would give a greater return to the State for all the advantages which had been enjoyed during the period of service. He did not approve the proposal which came from that (the Opposition) side of the House, to sweep away the privileges of the dockyards, which increased the attachment of the workmen to the service of the State. If these privileges were abolished—such as the superannuation allowances—and the employment were treated as a merely commercial bargain between employer and employed, the State, in his opinion, would not be served half as well or as economically as at present. A private employer had not nearly as great a stake in the continuance of his employment as the nation had in the continuance of the work at the dockyards. A good deal of sacrifice might economically be made by a Public Department in order to secure in skilled trades a body of workers in whom perfect reliance could be placed, who could be depended upon to serve continuously and vigorously in cases of emergency, putting aside their own comfort and convenience. So long as the Government were attached to their servants in the dockyards by relations like those that now subsisted, he thought that any small expenditure beyond what might be called a commercial wage would be money extremely well laid out. On the whole, he thought the statement

of the Civil Lord extremely satisfactory, and he was sure the hon. Member (Mr. Kearley) would do well under the circumstances to withdraw the Motion.

MR. BAKER (Portsmouth) said, he would not trespass on the time of the House for more than a few moments after the statements which had been made by the hon. Member for Devonport and by the Civil Lord of the Admiralty. He was not at all unmindful of what had been done by the present Government with regard to improving the conditions of labour in Her Majesty's dockyards. He was aware that last year a sum of nearly £40,000 was given for this purpose, but he was still compelled to point out to the House and to the Admiralty especially what might possibly have been overlooked—namely, that there was a large amount of dissatisfaction existing at the present time amongst the workmen in the dockyards on the ground which had been urged by the hon. Member for Devonport—namely, because at the present moment the rate of wages paid was far less than that which was laid down by the Unions as the standard rate through the country. It was quite true the men's Petitions did not all specifically mention the Union rate of wages. But if anyone would examine the Petitions they would find that while only three referred to the Union rate of wage specifically, nearly everyone was based on the complaint that the men were underpaid according to the Union rate of wage. With regard to the increase promised, he ventured to submit to the Admiralty that it would very much simplify their work if they were to adopt the Union rate of wage. As to the men being dissatisfied with it, he was sure they would be content, because it was the basis on which their Petitions had been formulated. With regard to the temper of men in the Metropolis, they were not discontented to the extent that had been suggested. As to security for the nation and protection for themselves being swept away, and a hiring from year to year substituted for it without the certainty and continuity of employment they were now afforded, he could speak from his own observation, and say that that was not the feeling in the dockyards. If in large shipbuilding yards the Union rate of wages was paid in spite of establishment charges, and yards which had

not these charges could not pay the same rate of wages, there must be some mismanagement of dockyard labour. Great battleships had been built in the Government dockyards at a saving of £40,000 or £50,000 as compared with ships built by contract. So the Union rate of wages was not asked for as a gift, but as a return for labour honestly given. With regard to the advantages that were promised, he not only thanked the Admiralty for what they did for his constituents last year, but for what they had now promised. It had been given generously in a way that would be most acceptable. He also congratulated the Admiralty on the outlook which they had afforded of a higher and more satisfactory rate of wage being given in the future. He did not at all look at the question as establishing a rule which would act either prejudicially to the Government or to the men. If the men could obtain the higher rate of wage after reasonable reductions for the privileges they enjoyed and the bonuses and pensions they received—unless they died before they were entitled to the latter—they should continue on the scale now established in the dockyards. He hoped the spirit of this Resolution would be carried out, and that a fair rate of wages would be afforded to those who worked so well for the Government.

***Mr. J. BURNS** (Battersea) said, whatever might have been his views on this particular question, they had been strengthened by the announcement of the eight hours day for the Admiralty men. Before he stated what his views were he had a right to remind the House of what he predicted last year, and which many Members approved—namely, that unless the Trade Union rates, wages, and conditions were observed in the Government dockyards the Government would be confronted every year by long speeches from Members who were driven by political pressure, first, to waste the time of the House, and, secondly, to introduce ideas and inequitable conditions that could not be applied to everyone of the Government establishments throughout the country, and which were framed mainly with the desire of pleasing a particular locality which was strong enough to bully the local Member. He ventured the more unreservedly on this question,

Mr. Baker

because he was not the Representative of a dockyard constituency, and was, therefore, not bound to look to the interest of a particular group of the community; but he felt that he had a claim to speak on any subject directly affecting the labour question generally. From this point of view, he contended that the Amendment, referring as it did to the local condition of one particular trade only—namely, that of shipwrights, and exclusively to naval establishments—was too narrow in its scope. It was, if he might so describe it, a one-eyed Amendment, and one which could not be looked at from the standpoint of national uniformity. It ignored the conditions in other Government Departments—besides confining its scope to one district alone, and it did not apply to the conditions of labour existing in private yards, which were the conditions formulated by the Trades Unions. If the House settled satisfactorily and permanently the question of wages, hours of labour, and conditions of labour, it must do so on a scientific basis, and from the point of view of national uniformity. On the one hand, the Amendment went too far if it was intended to retain under it the emoluments, pensions, and privileges of Government employment; and it did not go far enough if all the Trades Union conditions were to be conceded. What did the Amendment mean? It said that the wages should be equivalent to the Trades Union rates of wages generally accepted as current in each trade. What did “equivalent” mean? It meant that the Superintendent of Devonport Dockyard should say that 34s. per week, plus holidays and extras, was equal to 37s. a week Trades Union wages in some or other districts. They would then have a conflict of opinion as to the interpretation of “equivalent,” and as to “the wages current in each trade.” He must say that nothing had caused greater friction between employers and workmen than the miscellaneous way in which the words “fair wages,” “current wages,” and “equivalents” had been interpreted. They were rapidly approaching the condition of things when the old pension system with privileges and emoluments must be swept away. The system was disappearing, and the sooner it disappeared altogether the better. If

the eight hours day would help its abolition, let them ask the Government to extend the eight hours to every Department, and when the eight hours system was universally applied and settled let the House appoint a Committee to see that the system of classification was really abolished. It was not fair while the eight hours system was a tentative experiment, and before other Departments had secured it, for the Member for Devonport to speak for one district irrespective of what applied to the whole of the 70,000 or 80,000 in all Government Departments. The men could not have all the benefits of the Trades Union system plus the advantages, emoluments, and privileges of employments where the rate of wages was lower than the Union rate in consequence of these privileges. There were also many Civil servants and Local Government Bodies who would find it desirable to terminate the pension system and to secure the current Trade Union rate of wages, which it was hoped would be sufficient to enable the men to make arrangements for themselves to meet the requirements of old age. He objected to the employment of men under the conditions the Member for Devonport had described. This versatility of occupation did not mean excellence of work. As things now stood shipwrights could go in and work for a week on wood, then for a week on iron, and perhaps the next week on copper. Work turned out under such a *régime* could not be satisfactory either to the employer or the employed, and he felt confident that if it was examined into much of the weakness of the machinery of our ironclads must be attributed to a system that prevented that sub-division of work which meant good, reliable machinery, and the avoidance of disasters which would be sure to arise whenever a critical time came for the Navy if the present system continued. The programme which he should stand by would be "Hours first, classification second, and wages third." As sensible men they ought to deal with hours first, classification second, and wages third. If they dealt with the matter in that way they would get a better ship and better engines, and give greater satisfaction both to the Superintendent and the men. The best ship would be that on which gangs of specialist workmen were employed in their own particular work. At

Sheerness the most delicate and complex electrical engineering work was being made by apprentice shipwrights but 12 months out of their time. It was simply absurd to think that these apprentices were competent men to place in charge of electrical machinery on board a large ironclad. He would not vote in that House for any reconsideration of the wages of shipwrights or engineers in Her Majesty's Dockyards until the question of the overlapping of work was settled, either by experts in the Department or by a Special Committee of expert engineers from the House. In the meantime the eight hours system had no right to be vitiated at its inception by mixing up with it the question of wages and other conditions that should be dealt with when the shorter day was generally applied. When this happened he intended to move that Trades Union wages should be paid. Till then the present Resolution should be enforced, and the experience gained on the shorter day would enable them to settle wages once and for all. It was because he wanted to be fair both to the Department and the men, because he wanted to see the best ironclad turned out that it was possible for human hands to turn out, that he asked the Government not to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Devonport. He was for uniformity, discipline, good work, and Trade Union hours and wages. These the Amendment did not secure, and he should vote against it.

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth) said, he could not allow the speech of the hon. Member to pass without taking notice of it. The hon. Member had violently attacked the hon. Member for Devonport for venturing to put this matter before the House. He was not going to vote for the Motion, but he could not see why Dockyard Members alone of all Members of the House were not to be allowed to discuss matters of this kind; and he must enter his protest against such an idea. The hon. Member for Battersea contended that the most important question was the proper distribution of work among the different classes of artisans.

*MR. J. BURNS: The hon. Gentleman is entirely mistaken. I said that, the Government having introduced a reduction of hours for the War Office and

Admiralty, it was only fair that the men who had not got the eight hours should be included before classification, overlapping of work, and revision of wages were entered upon.

SIR E. CLARKE said, that was so; but the hon. Member went on to say that the distribution of work was a more important question than any. That might be a very important question, but he would point out that the work done in the Government Dockyards had been found equal to the best work done in private yards. If there had been improper employment of persons not qualified to do the work, it was a very odd thing that no fault was found with the work turned out. As far as his constituents were concerned, many of them had told him that they cared much less about the hours of labour than the wages. As a rule, the men had not felt the hours to be burdensome, and many told him that they desired rather to press the question of wages. So far as the Admiralty were concerned, the 48 hours week was announced for the dockyards, and though the change might take some time to work out, still it was going on, and therefore the hours question was out of the way. Why in the world should they not go on to discuss classification and wages? He should not have taken part in the Debate but for the speech of the hon. Member. He felt obliged to say that Members for the dockyards were entitled to speak in that House without the imputation being cast upon them that they had been bullied by their constituents.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said, he must protest against the imputation made by the hon. Member for Battersea that the Dockyard Members were actuated by unworthy motives. He would ask the hon. Member whether he never spoke for the gallery outside? The hon. Gentleman seemed to be surprised that important work was done by young hands at Sheerness. But he did not say there was any defect in the work. He thought it was highly satisfactory that the work could be carried out so well. Although he could not agree with the actual terms of the Resolution moved by the hon. Member for Devonport, it was his intention to vote for it should a Division

be taken, because it was in favour of the views which he had always upheld—namely, the just claims of the dockyard workmen for additional payment. He wished entirely to dissociate himself from that part of the speech of the proposer of the Motion which referred to Trades Unions. He denied the right of Trades Unions to dictate what wages should be paid to workmen, and he thought that their action of late had shown that they were animated not with a desire to help the workmen, but with a wish to forward their own ends by what he could not but call tyranny and coercion. He thought, however, that, on the ground of abstract justice, the men for whom he was now speaking had a right to an increase of pay. The concessions that had been made by the Government regarding rates of pay, classification, and other matters had not given satisfaction. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Robertson) said that these concessions were still in course of being carried out, but the complaint of the men was that the promises made by the Government were not acted upon. All classes of men employed in the dockyards complained that they were not paid at the same rate as the men employed in private yards. They contended that if they made a fair deduction for the privileges of pensions and continuity of work they were still not paid at as high a rate as men in private employment. He believed that the dockyard men were willing to absolutely forego some of their privileges if they could be placed on the same level as the workmen of private firms. The men were very much disappointed that the hopes that had been held out to them, notably at election times, by gentlemen opposite respecting the abolition of the system of classification had not been justified. They said that the present system of classification of work was more objectionable than classification of men, and they pointed out that everywhere except in the Government dockyards all shipwrights were paid at a uniform rate. He thought his constituents would be grateful for the concession of a 48 hours week, although he was bound to say that he could not under any circumstances support an Eight Hours Bill, which he thought would be an unjust and tyrannical interference with the right of everyone to work as long as he pleased.

He wished to allude to the claims of the engineer officers in respect of pay.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question cannot be dealt with on this Motion.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN bowed to this ruling, and proceeded to refer to the grievances of the engineer artificers. They formed, he said, a most important and useful body of men, and they were labouring under great grievances. Although the class was introduced in 1868, there had been up to this time, he believed, no increase of pay, and, what was more astonishing, the men were ineligible for promotion. Then there was the question of pensions. Men on the establishment were entitled at the age of 60 to a pension calculated on the number of years' service they had had; but if a man died just before attaining that age, all his pension fund, half of which he had contributed out of his wages, was forfeited, and nothing at all went to his widow. During the past month a very sad case had occurred at Sheerness, where a most excellent workman, who was forced to retire under the age of 60, had died, with the result that unless the Government made a grant the widow would be absolutely deprived of any assistance. He called that a cruel and bitter injustice, and he was surprised that it should have been so long unredressed. In the case of the hired man it was almost worse. He might be from 8 to 10 years working as a hired man before he got a place on the establishment, and it was not until he got on the establishment that he began to count time for pension. The hired man was entitled to a bonus at the end of his period of service instead of a pension, but that bonus he forfeited if he came on the establishment. It appeared to him most reasonable that the period of hired service should be counted for pension, and that the bonus should not be forfeited.

An hon. MEMBER: Do they get higher wages as hired men?

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN said, no doubt they did, as they were denied the advantages possessed by the men of the establishment. But the point was that the men when they came on the establishment should be able to count the whole of their service for pension. He

hoped the Government would be able to pay some attention to the points he had ventured to bring before them.

*MR. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) said, that as a Dockyard Member he was not at all ashamed to say in this House what he said in his constituency, that he would take every opportunity he could of bringing forward public questions relating to his constituents on every proper and reasonable occasion. He did not intend to take up the time of the House by bringing forward the grievances of individuals, but he would be wanting in his duty if he did not bring forward public grievances relating to the administration of the dockyards, concerning which this House was called upon to give a final decision between the Admiralty and their *employés*. Here they had an occasion, on moving the Deputy Speaker out of the Chair, where the pay and position of the Government *employés* in dockyards was directly before the House. He protested against being told by the Member for Battersea that he was driven by political pressure to waste the time of the House. The prime grievance of the Member for Battersea was the interference of the shipwrights in electrical workshops, but in the Return published by the Admiralty on Saturday one of the provisions made was that shipwrights were not to be employed in those shops. His was a grievance, therefore, which was provided for by the Admiralty themselves. But the matters which he wanted to bring before the House were matters which had not been provided for by the Admiralty, and which formed a just ground of complaint. If the Admiralty were only as good as their word they would have little to complain of. They spoke with a very soft voice when they had to meet the complaints of Dockyard Members, and they were told that everything that could be done should be done. Nothing could be sweeter and clearer than the declaration to-night of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, but was it to be carried out? It was his duty to say, on behalf of his constituents, that the classification scheme which the country was told was to be abolished was not being abolished, and would not be abolished by the measures which the Admiralty had taken. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty had said that it would

ultimately lead to abolition, but "ultimately" meant from 10 to 12 or 15 years hence, and during all that time the classification would subsist and exist as it had done in the past. It had given rise to grievances in the past, and would not be altered by the present scheme of the Admiralty. What length of life did the Admiralty suppose their new scheme was going to have? Was it going to have five, or, at the outside, 10 years? Did the House suppose that 10 years hence the Admiralty would find it unnecessary to alter the conditions of labour in the dockyards—the conditions of which classification had formed one in the past and would form one in the future? If the present objectionable system was not got rid of during the whole length of the life of the Admiralty scheme, what benefit was there in the smooth words of the Admiralty, that they had abolished classification? They had done nothing of the sort; and not only had they done nothing of the sort at present, but the abolition would not come in for so many years in the future that by the time it did come in they might fully expect a new scheme in operation. They had, moreover, started a brand-new system of classification by allocating certain extra pay for certain extra work, which had raised a storm of disapproval from the men in every dockyard. The men believed that it was intended to give local officials a loophole for choosing one man more than another for extra pay, and they all said, "We will willingly give it up, and let us have the money which the Admiralty propose to spend upon that part of their scheme in order to raise the all-round rates of wages." The amount of extra pay to be given to shipwrights for special work was upwards of £3,000, and the men said that it would be much better to spend the money in raising *pro tanto* the weekly wages of the shipwrights. It was no use the Admiralty attempting to bring in a new scheme for the benefit of the dockyards if the dockyards themselves did not consider that that scheme was of any benefit to them, and although they might be right in theory, in practice it would not work. There were other difficulties which the men found in the administration to which he was bound to

call attention. The Admiralty did not act fairly towards their men. He would adduce two instances. One was the case of men who acquired a certain position under the Admiralty Regulations in the years 1881, 1882, and 1883. That position was connected with the daughtsmen's work. They held that position till the year 1890; then a new scheme was brought forward by the Admiralty, and in 1891 the Admiralty superseded those men without the slightest reference, of course, to them, without in any way getting their consent to the supersession, and in 1891 they were clearly told they had lost their position. Now, no private employer would dare to alter a contract entered into by him with his men at his own will and pleasure without reference to, or without the consent of, his men. A County Court Judge would not for a moment allow an employer to do such a thing. If that was so, he challenged the Admiralty publicly in his place to deny that they had done what was unfair and unjust, and what no private employer would be able to do without making himself liable to an action. Another instance of unfair treatment was the way in which the Admiralty and Treasury between them worked what was called a system of acting pay. When a man was unable to do his work it was only proper that a person who did his work for him temporarily should be paid extra, supposing he did work which was paid higher than his ordinary work. And it was also right and fair that that extra pay should carry no fresh privilege with it beyond the extra pay for extra work and for a higher kind of work. But in certain circumstances this so-called acting pay was given not for temporary but for permanent work, and in those circumstances it should be treated as substantive, not as acting, pay. Men were wanted in larger numbers than were available for doing certain work in the dockyards; for instance, say that more Inspectors of Shipwrights were wanted than were in the yards, the Admiralty did not appoint more Inspectors of Shipwrights, but made so-called acting Inspectors of Shipwrights, who were not men who acted for others, but who were brought in on the strength of Inspectors of Shipwrights, they not being in sufficient numbers. These acting Inspectors worked some-

times for 12 and 14 years consecutively, and they ought to have all the advantages of their position. When a man was pensioned his pension was a certain proportion of the pay he had been earning. Acting pay, as it was called, was not pensionable; that was to say, was not taken into account when the amount of the pension came to be fixed, even when it was really substantive pay, under the circumstances above stated. He asserted that that was a monstrous and flagrant injustice. If a man's pay were increased for a short period, clearly he would not be entitled to be pensioned on that temporary increase. But if the increase had been going on for years as part of the regular needs of the establishment, it was clear that that acting pay was substantive pay, and ought to carry with it pensionable rights. Two or three years ago he brought this matter to the attention of the Admiralty—not once nor twice; in fact, he had done so ever since he had had the honour to be a Member for a dockyard constituency, and he was informed that the Treasury had a Rule as to what class of pay was pensionable. That would be a very good Rule if acting pay and temporary pay was, as it professed to be under its name, of a temporary character, but it was not to be used to shut out men who for years had been receiving substantial pay which the Admiralty chose to call acting pay. The Treasury acted to the Admiralty like the hard man in the city acted to the benevolent member of the firm, who was not allowed to do what he wished on account of his partner. They were told the Treasury Rule was like the laws of the Medes and Persians—unalterable; but it seemed they might be evaded by the Admiralty. The Treasury Rule for acting pay did not apply to “charge” pay. Call it “charge” pay and it would be pensionable. That sounded reasonable, so far as the men were concerned; it did not matter to them whether it was called acting pay or “charge” pay so long as it was pensionable; but if the Admiralty considered the Treasury Rule unjustifiable and unfair, they should insist upon having it altered, or abolish such absurd nomenclature, and cease to call the men “acting” Inspectors when they really were permanent. However, the difficulty with the “charge” pay was this—that a

“charge” man's appointment was very much less permanent than an acting Inspector's appointment; therefore, if for the sake of getting pensionable pay the men allowed themselves to be called “charge” men, the officials could turn round and say they had no right to keep the work, and they would give it to someone else. Acting Inspectors could not have their work taken from them in this rough-and-ready way. It was right that the House and the country should know that the root grievance of the dockyard men against the Admiralty was the system by which the local officials had the lives and fortunes of the men in their own hands. The head of them was either an Admiral or Captain Superintendent, and all these officials were saturated with the idea of naval discipline. The men were told, if they made complaint, they were mutinous and insubordinate. A man who made a complaint to him was had up and reprimanded for having made it. It was like an employer who would call up and reprimand one of his workmen because he wrote to a Trades Union Secretary. He (Mr. Allen) acted as a Union Secretary for the men, and he was sorry to hear the Civil Lord of the Admiralty speak of these men as a large civil army. The grievances of the men were very much aggravated by the fact that these local authorities had the power in their own hands to reward subservieny in a way which was prejudicial to independence of character. And, what was more—and he did not suppose it would for a moment be denied—favour was shown in the matter of selection for different posts and appointments. From the point of view of the local authorities it was right that it should be shown; it kept men, as it were, in hand, but it was this as much as anything that led to all the grievances between the men and the Admiralty. The men had no other opportunity, except occasions of this sort when the House sat to consider the question of dockyard employment, of bringing their grievances forward. He had not brought forward to-night a single individual grievance, only those relating to the system of administration. The system of administration had to be decided by this House, and in this House the men submitted they ought to be heard through their Repre-

sentatives, without it being imputed to those Representatives that they were wasting the time of the House, and were merely actuated by tenderness for the safety of their seats if they ventured to bring forward the grievances under which their constituents laboured.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, he would have regard to the fact that they had before them much more important national questions than the one they were now discussing, and would, therefore, be as brief as possible in his remarks. They had heard a great deal of discussion that evening from the working men's point of view. He, for one, did not object to it; but they had never heard the employers' or the taxpayers' point of view alluded to, and he thought the superior of the dockyard labourer, through the taxpayer, was entitled to be heard as well as the advocates of the workmen. There was one feature about the present controversy which, to his mind, was most unsatisfactory. It seemed to have become a perennial question, with no settlement—no ending to it. As the Estimates were brought before the House so year by year did these various points crop up—the same questions arose and the same discussions. He sympathised very much with a great deal in the Civil Lord's speech. He thought that the two years' experience which the hon. Member had had in connection with the dockyard work had made a serious impression on his mind, and that he was not so ready to concede everything asked as he was at the start of his official career. It was quite clear from what they had heard to-night that the present scheme was not regarded as a complete or final settlement, and that it would only be used as a lever for further agitation. In fact, they were told by the Civil Lord that already he had received something like 154 Petitions, to which he was going to give his careful attention. Many of these petitioners would make further requests for advances in wages and other modifications of the existing system. It had become a most serious matter for the House. It was now three or four years since the question of improving the position of the *employés* of the dockyards was brought prominently forward. For 17 years nothing had been done in connection with an advance in the wages of the

men. Four years ago it was his duty, on behalf of the late Board of Admiralty, to submit a proposal for an advance of wages, and that proposal increased the wages by a sum of £80,000 a year. The basis on which that advance was granted was taking the main rate of Trades Union wages at the different private yards in different parts of the country, and getting at the average between what those wages were in good times and what they were in bad times. He thought that was as fair a way as possible to approach the matter. The present Government came into Office, and he understood from the Civil Lord that in April last the scheme brought in for advancing the dockyard wages added something like £28,000 a year, and this year the advance would be £38,000. He did not quite understand whether the proposal to-day involved an advance in £38,000, in addition to the £28,000 advanced in April last.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON : One Return includes the other.

Mr. FORWOOD said, he understood, then, that the advance was £38,000, making, together with what the late Government did, an advance of £118,000 to the general wages of dockyard men. In addition to that direct advance, they were told to-day that the hours of labour had been reduced from 50 hours and 20 minutes per week to 48 hours per week. He should not be doing justice to the character of the workmen to suppose that in the 48 hours they were going to do as much work as they had hitherto done in 50 hours, and though the Civil Lord did not tell them so, he assumed it was not the intention of the Government to make any modification of the wages, having regard to the reduction of hours; in other words, the same would be paid for 48 hours as hitherto had been paid for 50 hours. He had made a calculation, and if that were so the cost to the country in the small loss of hours as it appeared would amount to £50,000 a year, so that in the last four years they should have paid in meal or malt the substantial sum of £168,000 upon a pay roll of £1,000,000 sterling a year. This was only setting the ball rolling for further and increased agitation, and that must be unsatisfactory to all Members of the House. The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Burns) said that the proper

principle was Trade Union wages and conditions. He would say at once if that was admitted there would be an end to these discussions. The Civil Lord very properly took up the question of Trades Unions, and asked what was to be the guiding spirit of the wages regulated by the Trades Unions. They knew that the wages varied very considerably between good times and bad times. He had a statement before him which showed that they varied to the extent of something like 6s., 7s., and even 8s. a week between good and bad times. Then, again, they had a great variety between one district in the country and another. Shipwrights made an average of 30s. in one place, 33s. in another, and as much as 37s. 6d. in another. If they were to have Trades Union wages, which of these places was to be the guiding spirit? If there were to be Trades Union wages, all the advantages dockyard men now had must go by the board, and they would make the dockyards the rendezvous of all the unemployed men engaged in the shipbuilding work in the country, and every one who went to the yards for employment was as much entitled to obtain it as any of the men occupied in their duties in the yard. That was one point for the consideration of the Dockyard Members. Another was the higher they raised the cost of shipbuilding at the dockyards the keener became the competition with the private yards, and he believed that this House was not going to allow work to be done at the dockyards if the cost of performing it was much higher than would be the cost of performing similar work at private yards on the Tyne and the Clyde. As he had said, this scheme put before them would not be a settlement. Much had been said of what was called classified or graduated pay. But this scheme, except as regarded shipwrights and joiners, was one succession of classified or graduated pay. Take the two first headings of the scheme—there was no less a difference between trimmers and stokers than from 21s. to 27s. What was that but a graduated scale of payment according to their skill and intelligence? That it meant classification on page 9 of the Return the Admiralty said they could not admit the necessity, but seniority would always be taken into consideration in making selections for an advance;

therefore, it was idle to say this scheme did away with any grievances of classification. What he ventured to say to the House was this—that there ought to be an end put to this constant and regular yearly agitation, and this constant demand on the Government. It was a system that was most demoralising to the men in the yards; it produced an unsatisfactory state of feeling there, for each of the men in the several trades were trying how best to obtain some advantage from the next House of Commons or the next Government. His feeling was that they should not get this matter settled unless the House took it up itself, and he thought the best course would be to refer this question of the men, their privileges and emoluments, to be considered by a Committee of this House. Let the Committee be fairly constituted, having upon it the Labour Representatives; let them hear the men from the dockyards, the officers of the Admiralty, and then come to the House and say, “We think so-and-so should be the scale of pay.” If that were done, he thought they would have a scheme that would have sufficient acceptance to prevent this constant recurrence of these Debates from year to year.

MR. W. ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme) thought that no one could have heard the statement of an intention to adopt the eight hours day in the Government dockyards without satisfaction; but he did not agree with the last speaker, that it would mean a decrease in the amount of work per week that would be turned out. The experience of those who had already adopted the eight hours day was that the men turned out as much work in the eight hours as they formerly turned out in the longer period, and he saw no reason why in the case of the dockyards the same thing should not hold good. But while he welcomed the statement of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty and thoroughly agreed with him, that was not what the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Kearley) asked for; the hon. Member asked for bread, and the Civil Lord of the Admiralty had given him a stone. Far be it from him, however, from saying the stone was not of as much value as the bread, for he was as strong an advocate of an eight hours day as well could be, but it was not what the hon. Member had asked for.

What the hon. Member asked for seemed to him to be fair and reasonable—namely, that the Government should pay the Trades Union rate of wages in their dockyards. And why had he to ask that? Because the Resolution that the House carried last year, on the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Cambridge University (Sir J. Gorst), had not been carried out. If that Resolution had been carried out there would have been no need for the hon. Member to have moved his Motion. The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Burns) last year objected to this Resolution on the ground that it was too wide and too indefinite, and now he objected to the narrower Resolution on the ground that an eight hours day was being introduced, and that the two issues ought not to be confused. But why should it confuse the two issues? The hon. Member for Battersea seemed to him to take up a line that he was not used to. The hon. Member seemed to advocate the side of the employer of labour, and did not appear, as he usually did, as the Representative of labour.

*Mr. J. BURNS said, he must protest against this misrepresentation of his speech. The whole of his contention was that they wanted a Trade Union wage, and because the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Kearley) did not ask for that but its equivalent, whatever that vague phrase meant, he protested against it.

Mr. W. ALLEN said, at any rate, the hon. Member said he would vote against it, whilst they who supported this Motion said they called on the Government to adopt a Trade Union rate of wages. The hon. Member for Battersea might not agree with that, but if they were right the hon. Member was voting against a Trade Union rate of wages in the dockyards. Then the hon. Member for Battersea asked if they would advocate the labourers in the dockyard giving up the privileges they now had if granted Trades Union wages? The hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Kearley) practically stated that the *employés* were willing to give up their present privileges if they were granted a Trade Union rate of wages. It seemed to him of vast importance that they should pay the workmen in the Government yards the current rate of wages in the trade,

when in the contracts that the Government sent out for various things they inserted a clause that the employer of labour must pay to those who worked on those articles the current Trades Union rate of wages. If the Government did not pay the Trades Union rate of wages, then it would be natural for the employer to turn round and tell them to put their own house in order. But if the Government were to pay the Trades Union rate of wages and at the same time give continuous employment, the consequences would be that they would get the pick of the men, and have their work better done. Surely it was not unreasonable to ask the Government to pay the Union rate of wages? A private employer had to make a profit, or, if a company, to pay a dividend; but the Government were under no such obligation. The Resolution asked them, in the first place, to pay a living wage, and, in the second place, to set a good example to private employers. But the Government were not doing either one or the other. For instance, the coopers at Devonport were paid from 10 to 25 per cent. less than the prices agreed upon by the London masters and the Coopers' Trade Union. Surely that was not carrying out the spirit of the Resolution adopted by the House of Commons. Surely the Government, as a large employer of labour, should respect the agreement come to between the Representatives of the men and the masters. Again, it was stated in evidence before the Labour Commission that while the average pay of ship-riggers in the Government yards was 4s. 4d. per day, the average pay in the great commercial centres of London, Liverpool, Hull and Newcastle-on-Tyne was 5s. 8d. per day. If the Government had carried out the spirit of the Resolution adopted by the House, it would have increased the wages of the ship-riggers by 1s. 4d. per day and the wages of the coopers by 10 to 25 per cent. per week. The Government would only treat their *employés* in a fair and generous manner when they carried out the wishes of by far the largest majority in the House. It was all very well to look at the question from the taxpayers' point of view; but the working-classes' point of view was clearly indicated during the recent struggle in the coal trade, when all working men sub-

Mr. W. Allen

scribed largely to help those who were out of work, and his opinion was that the taxpayers would not object to this small addition to the taxes when they would know that the money would go into the pockets of the *employés* of the Government. He believed the Resolution to be a just and fair one, and if his hon. Friend pressed it to a Division he would certainly support him by his vote.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) said, he could not go into the details of this dockyard question like the hon. Members who represented the dockyards, but he would give his views as to the general principles which he thought ought to guide the Government in fixing the wages in the dockyards on grounds that were fair and right. He entirely concurred in what had been said by his hon. Friend the Member for Battersea. There was very little in the speech of his hon. Friend that he did not find himself in complete agreement with, and he thought his hon. Friend had put the question on a sound and solid basis. There could be no doubt whatever that the time had come when they ought to put this question on some firm and definite basis, for they could no longer tolerate these constant appeals to the House by Representatives of the dockyards. From the taxpayers' point of view, he heartily supported the recommendation of the hon. Member for Battersea. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty had said that in a great many respects the wages of the dockyard men were above Trades Union wages, and yet the hon. Member for Devonport asked that his constituents were to have not only the advantage of Trades Union wages, but also the privileges and advantages which they enjoyed under the whole system. [*Cries of "No!"*] It was impossible that that could happen. The dockyard men could not have their cake and eat it, and it was unfair to working men in other parts of the country that dockyard men should out of Government money be paid higher wages than other working men received. That was an utterly impossible position, but undoubtedly it was the claim made by the hon. Member for Devonport. [Mr. KEARLEY : No, no.] At any rate, that was the view he took of the Resolution before the House. He thought the establishment system in the dockyards a bad one. It was said it had many

advantages, but he was sure that it had more disadvantages. For instance, a great number of men were kept upon the establishment who would not be retained in private yards. There was also too much of family influence in the dockyards. Jobs were frequently done owing to family influence. What was worse, there were also Party jobs, and one of the worst Party jobs was committed by his own Party in 1878, when they put a large number of men on the dockyard establishment previous to a General Election. But both sides were in this respect tarred with the same brush, and either Party was no better and no worse than the other. He would like to see the establishment system abolished altogether, because then the jobs could not be perpetrated. The dockyards ought to be placed more in competition with the private yards, and he was certain that much of the work would be better done in the latter than in the former. He was sure that if they did away with the establishment system and put the Government yards under the same conditions as the private yards it would be much better for the country. It was said that there were privileges granted to the men by employers in private firms. Any concessions made to the men in private firms ought certainly to be retained, but there were exceptional privileges in the dockyards which ought to be abolished. The fact was, that they had gone on long enough trying to work the two systems side by side. He would advise the Government to give up the old establishment system and pay Trades Union wages. The Secretary to the Admiralty had said they were trying to give wages which represented the average of Trades Union wages. But that system would not work, for they would have the Dockyard Representatives coming to the House and insisting that the men should be paid the highest point reached in wages by the Trades Unions. The proper thing was to pay Trades Union wages pure and simple. He did not complain of the action of the Dockyard Representatives, but he should say that the pressure which was brought to bear upon Members of Parliament by dockyard men and by Civil servants had become intolerable. He once served on a Commission where every member, regardless of Party, was so impressed with this fact that they were inclined to recommend that Civil servants

should be disfranchised. He believed that was what would happen if they had year after year this constant pressure brought to bear on the Dockyard Members, and then those Members using their political influence with the Government, especially when majorities were small, in order to raise the wages of dockyard *employés*. It was a form of bribery which ought not to be tolerated. Private bribery was bad enough, but bribing constituencies for the Member's own private advantage with public money was the worst possible sort of bribery. There was another matter to which he would like to call attention. He was afraid one of the tendencies of this system would be to drive out of our dockyards and Government factories a great many old soldiers and sailors. He thought this House ought, as far as possible, to find employment for these men. He had never been able to see why these men, if they were good men and able to do the work—and if otherwise they ought not to be employed at all—should have their pensions practically deducted from their wages. A man's pension earned in the service of the State was his own property, and he ought to have the same wages as if he had not the pension. He did not believe the remedy suggested by the late Secretary to the Admiralty—namely, a Committee of this House, would stop the evil for a single year. At least it would very soon be argued that the circumstances had altered since the Committee had met. What they wanted was some self-adjusting arrangement like Trades Union wages, and for that reason he heartily agreed with the suggestion of the hon. Member for Battersea.

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff) said, that if this Motion was put to the House he should record his vote against it, and he should do so in the interests of the dockyard workers themselves. There could be but one outcome from this perpetual movement in behalf of the dockyards—and although it might not be a very near one, it would come—and that was, to give a vast deal more work to the private establishments, and to bring about a great reduction in the construction staff of the dockyards. He should not be sorry to see that take place, because, looking to the spirit which animated these Debates, and seeing the dockyard

men were so excessively dissatisfied with their lot, he saw no reason why this House should maintain the dockyards in a stronger position. Why were the establishments set up and maintained? Entirely because they had a body of workmen working under very considerable privileges such as constant employment and constant income. But, if the dockyard men came to the House and asked that the differences between them and men employed outside should be removed, then the very ground on which the dockyard establishments were set up was taken away, and there was no reason why ships required for the Public Service should not be constructed in the private yards of the country. He agreed very much with what the hon. Member for Preston had said. This question had taken such an acute form that it seemed impossible in the House of Commons to give attention to any adequate and liberal scale to the great naval affairs of the country because of this eternal cropping-up of dockyard grievances.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : Notwithstanding that this discussion has lasted perhaps as long as time will very conveniently allow for it, it may not be out of place if I say a few words before we come to a conclusion on the matter. Although I have no direct connection with the Admiralty and its workers, yet as last year I was the mouthpiece of the Government on the question raised by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I can say a few words with some degree of authority on the part of the Government. There are two subjects connected with this matter, upon neither of which I intend to say anything. First, as to the conduct and position of the Dockyard Members. There may be a good deal to be said on both sides of that question, but it is not a pleasant question on which to embark, and therefore I will leave it aside. The other subject is the question of the grievances which workmen in the dockyards complain of. That would be a proper question to deal with on the Navy Estimates, but it has no immediate connection with the Resolution before the House. That Resolution asks the House of Commons to determine that the men employed in the dockyards shall receive, according to some vague sort of definition, Trades Union rates of wages. There is one

condition which ought to attach to any such Resolution as that before the House, and that is that it should, if possible, unanimously commend itself to the Members of the House. The two previous Instructions that have been passed by the House have been agreed to unanimously, as it is very desirable that such Instructions should be. But it is apparent that this Resolution cannot be carried unanimously. The Motion has been strongly supported by some hon. Gentlemen who represent dockyard constituencies, but it has been attacked by others. It has been by no one more forcibly opposed than by my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea; and I venture to think that on a question like this my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea is a great authority, even a greater authority than some of those who have found fault with what he has said. My hon. Friend pointed out that the Resolution is at once vague and narrow in its effect. I do not think myself, speaking frankly, that it is a Motion which the Government of the day should be justified in accepting. We have fully accepted the principle that the current rate of wages in a district ought to be paid both in the Government workshops and by its contractors. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty cited the carefully-considered terms—which, I think, I may quote again—stating the present view of the Admiralty's position under the Instructions of the House. The words are:—

"That the Admiralty should remunerate its workmen on a scale which, taking everything into consideration, is not inferior to that of outside workmen of the same or an analogous class; and, if at any time it be shown that any trade or section of a trade is receiving less than it ought to receive, it is the duty of the Department to set the matter right."

Now, how have we carried out this direction? I challenge any Member of the House to mention a case in which, when the Departments have been informed that lower wages than those stated are being paid by the contractor, the matter has not been immediately investigated, and, if it has been found a fair complaint, has not been at once set right. This course has been carried out with the greatest fidelity by every Department of the Government. The workmen directly employed by the Government have from time to time received a considerable in-

crease of wages, and we have in that way given proof that it is our desire to do exactly what is prescribed. If we were to accept a Union rate of wages we should have to know, as has been abundantly pointed out to-night, whether it is to be the Union rate in the locality or a general average Union rate, the payment of which would probably cause as much discontent as if you were to put Union rates of wages aside altogether. This being the way in which the Government have carried out, and will continue to carry out, the Instructions of the House, is it desirable to fetter their hands by passing this vague Resolution? I agree with the hon. Member for Cardiff that the men in the dockyard, and those who here plead their cause, ought to take care that they do not push matters a little too far. We are all ready to maintain these great establishments in full efficiency. At the same time, our principle is to give a fair share of work to private workshops and the great shipbuilding yards in other parts of the country; and if the establishments in the South of England become too costly or make work difficult and inconvenient, there is an easy remedy, which is to transfer the larger part of the shipbuilding to the private yards. I do not say it would be desirable to do this to too large an extent; and it is certainly not the policy of the Government, or likely to be that of any Government, to displace large quantities of labour in the Government establishments; but it is worth the while of the workmen concerned to take to heart the warning given to-night that if repeated efforts are made under Parliamentary pressure to raise the scale of wages to an undue extent, there is always a simple remedy, which, however, I believe the House of Commons would be reluctant to adopt. There is another reason why I think the Government may be trusted to act reasonably in this matter. The hon. Member for Battersea took that line, and the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme, I observe, from his greater knowledge and wider experience, proceeded to lecture my hon. Friend and to point out the line he ought to have taken. But we have done more than this—we have acted in a remarkable manner in other respects than in regard to this matter of fair wages. The announcement that my hon. Friend

has made to-night as to the introduction of a 48 hours week is a very remarkable and significant announcement. No one has had a larger share in pushing forward that question than my hon. Friend and countryman who sits below the Gangway. I was able some time ago to announce this policy in connection with the War Office. I was not surprised that the Admiralty hesitated or delayed a little in following that example, because, as is well known, the factories with which I have to deal are the very kind of factories or shops that lend themselves easily and without much, complication, to the adoption of shorter hours, whereas the establishments of the Admiralty are more scattered and various, and render necessary great circumspection and careful inquiry. The hon. Member for Preston has spoken of the conditions we have had to impose in introducing shorter hours. I think he a little exaggerated what has happened. In making concessions of this kind the Government have a right to ask from the men in their employment some concession in return. There is no denying the fact that in Government factories there is a little more indulgence and laxity than there is in private yards. There are little indulgences and irregularities allowed in Government establishments which are not permitted in private yards, and all that has been done is to reduce those little privileges which the workman can very well give up when so much is being done for him; and I am glad to say that, to the best of my information, there has been no substantial complaint whatever from any of the men. Of course, when the question of wages is dealt with, we come at once to the whole question of establishments. I am of opinion, and have never failed to express the opinion in this House, that establishments are the greatest mistake in the world. The country would be much better served if there were no establishments at all, if there were no established men—no men going on for pension—and if the whole of the men could be treated in the same way as they were in private yards. But there would be a great deal of difficulty in introducing a new system and discontinuing the old. There would be a long time during which there would be men under each system. If, however

there is a strong feeling in the direction of a uniform arrangement, I can see no objection to carrying further the movement towards what I should call the liberation of labour in public dockyards. I have only one word more to say. With regard to the employment of old soldiers and sailors, which my hon. Friend has referred to, I very much sympathise with the desire to employ them, and am also opposed to counting their pensions as any part of their pay, but in many cases they are not fit to perform the ordinary day's work of an able-bodied man. The work will be very loyal and honest work so far as it goes, but old soldiers and sailors are not fitted for every kind of employment. Therefore, much is not to be expected in that direction, but I should be very sorry if any trade movement should have the effect of making the employment of such men in Government establishments impossible. Having said this much, and after the speech of my hon. Friend the Civil Lord, and the general expression of the opinion of the House, I would appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport to withdraw his Motion. He has gained the advantage of having the matter discussed at great length, and, on the whole, I think in a sympathetic spirit. I would venture to ask my hon. Friend whether it would not be better, in the interests of those for whom he acts, to withdraw his Motion.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I should not have taken any part in this protracted Debate if it had not been for one or two observations of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. He sounded what I thought a timely note of warning to the dockyard employés. He said that if the pressure to which the House is year by year subjected becomes intolerable, there is a very simple remedy—namely, to gradually reduce the Government establishments and put the work out elsewhere. Some six or seven years ago, in conjunction with my right hon. Friend near me, I had to face the very difficulty which the right hon. Gentleman anticipates. I was suddenly called upon to undertake the affairs of the Admiralty at a time when the dockyards were in much disfavour. Their work, though good, was costly and dilatory, and there was a strong move-

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

ment made, particularly among those to whom I am politically opposed, to bring about the abolition of the dockyards as building establishments, and their maintenance for repairs only. I want the dockyard *employés* clearly to understand that if such a proposition is ever made, for every political vote the dockyard *employés* can command the shipwrights in other parts of England can command 10. Therefore, if any attempts are made by political pressure and influence to improve the position of the dockyard *employés* at the expense of the rest of the community, it is very easy to see that there is a practical and effectual remedy. My right hon. Friend and I had a very unpleasant task to try and reform the dockyards and place them on such a basis as would enable them to compete with modern appliances in private yards. I am bound to say that the results of the reforms we have carried out have been most remarkable. The work of the dockyards during the past five or six years has been such that it holds its own well with that of the best private yards in the country. But dockyard *employés* must not presume too much on the good work they have done in the past. I agree with everything the Minister for War has said. The Government as employers of labour ought to set an example. I am glad the hours have been reduced. I believe that where proper supervision is exercised and men are made to do their best, eight hours are about as much as an able-bodied man can do; but, of course, under the exigencies of the Public Service overtime has been and may be necessary, and the present reduction ought to be associated with the understanding that overtime may occasionally have to be worked, though it ought not to be the chronic condition of the Public Service. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that he thought establishments were a mistake. On that the opinion of those in the employ of the Admiralty must, to a large extent, be consulted, and almost all the 20,000 employed are in favour of the continuous employment the establishments afford. I believe it would be a mistake to attempt their reduction. There is no desire on the part of the great majority of the House to treat otherwise than fairly all those employed

in the dockyards; but I hope the moral of this Debate will be taken to heart by the Dockyard Representatives and those they represent. What is wanted is a little more backbone in Parliamentary candidates. I think the results of the Debate will be to this effect—that whilst the dockyard *employés*, whom I am bound to look upon as amongst the pick of the artisans of the United Kingdom, will be fairly dealt with, if their Representatives yield unduly to political pressure, the House will be stiff-backed enough to pay no attention to them.

MR. KEARLEY said, that after listening attentively to the remarks of the Secretary for War, which he understood to be practically a repetition of what the Civil Lord had said—for he was unfortunate enough not to be able to catch the full purport of his remarks—he felt the undertaking given by the Government to have these matters, whenever they might be proved to be worthy of reconsideration, thoroughly inquired into perfectly satisfactory. He did not abate from the position he had taken up—that it would be beneficial that Trades Union wages should be introduced. But he felt satisfied with the undertaking given by the Secretary for War. He asked to be allowed to withdraw his Motion, and he took the opportunity of thanking the Government for their great concession so far as regarded the reduction of the hours of labour to 48 was concerned.

MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said, that in successive years he had heard the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Kearley) and his Colleagues, and the Members of the Government, make the same identical speeches, and it seemed to him that, unless some step was taken to bring about a fixed arrangement with the dockyard men, they would every Session waste at least one day over these matters. It depended upon how pliable the House was, or how much backbone it exhibited, whether wages were raised or were continued as at present. He thought that the system in operation in the dockyards was a bad one—altogether out of date according to present ideas of labour and relations between employers and employed. Public shipbuilding yards might have been absolutely necessary at one time, when there were no private

yards to compete with them, and when men, if they left the Government service, could not be replaced; but now the work in the private yards was done quite as well as that carried out in the dockyards. He saw no reason why the regulations in force in private yards should not be adopted in the dockyards. If a man did a certain amount of work why not pay him for it accordingly? If the votes for candidates in dockyard constituencies were to be given according to the number of gratuities obtained for the men these Debates would take place every year. So long as money could be squeezed out of the Public Exchequer by Parliamentary pressure, so long would the dockyard men remain dissatisfied. As for classification, no doubt, theoretically, it was a good thing, but, practically, it could not be carried out. The practice of paying men on a different scale on the ground that some were more skilled than others was fast dying out in private yards, one universal rate of wages being paid. He would abolish the establishment system altogether, and pay the men the rates customary in the Trades Unions. He had had many fights with the Trades Unions, sometimes having beaten them and sometimes having been beaten, and he had no doubt he should have other fights with them. Generally speaking, however, he got on very well with them; and if he had any influence at the Admiralty he should advise the adoption of the system whereby men would be taken on when they were required, paid the Trades Union rate of wages, and sent away when they were not wanted. That system worked well in the private yards, and he did not see why it should not work equally well in the Government dockyards.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, that the hon. Member for Preston had talked about employing old soldiers in the dockyards, but he had not meant decrepit individuals of 70 or 80, such as were in the mind of the Secretary for War, but Reservists averaging from 25 to 30 years of age. Such men were as fit for employment in the dockyards as any workmen could be.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. Wolff

THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said, before referring to the condition of the Naval Reserve, he would say a few words upon Lord Spencer's Memorandum. It was a new departure for the Admiralty, which would have a great and lasting effect, in manning the Navy to introduce seamen from the Merchant Service for the Reserve. He was not one of those who clung to the superstition that no one could ever make a good seaman for the Navy who had not been brought up to it from a boy. It was now proposed to introduce 800 men from the Merchant Service, and what he wanted to know was on what terms they would enter the Service. Probably the right hon. Gentleman would tell them when he introduced the Estimates what he intended to do in that respect. Would they enter on the same terms and conditions as the men already in the Service, or would they be considered as short service men only passing through the Service, in a few years to form the nucleus of a further considerable and very valuable Reserve? In considering this question of the Naval Reserve, three questions arose: First, what number of men were enrolled for that purpose; secondly, what was the quality of the men when they were obtained; and, thirdly, were the men nominally in reserve really available? Nominally, the Reserve at present consisted of three portions: the first-class, 10,000 men; second-class, roughly, 10,000; and then the pensioners and firemen, about 6,000; in round numbers about 26,000, including boys. How many of these men could be counted upon in time of war? Sir George Tryon's Committee inquired into the subject some years ago, and came to the conclusion in their Report that 10,000 men might be obtained immediately, though it was rather difficult to judge upon what basis they formed their opinion. That estimate, of course, had reference to the early period of a war, and for ascertaining how many might be got as time went on, say in a year or so, no figures were available; but as far as he was able to see, discounting the pensioners, if out of the 26,000 men 20,000 could be got, we might consider ourselves lucky, say, after war had been going on for a year. Was the

Royal Naval Reserve, then, sufficient for our requirements? That was a very difficult question, as the Committee he had just referred to had evidently found. His own rough estimate was that our seamen, including coastguards and men employed in harbour duties, would be enough to man the Fleet in ordinary times. But in time of war the ordinary strength would have to be increased by at least 10 per cent., or 6,000 men. Then the question of waste in war time arose. That, again, was extremely difficult to gauge, and the only way to arrive at it would be from the Admiralty's figures in former wars, assuming that the duties would be roughly the same. Taking 10 per cent., another 6,000 men would be required, leaving 8,000 men in the Reserve for the expansion of all kinds required to be provided for in time of war, which would be very large. We should probably find ourselves, after we had been at war for a year or so, in the old difficulty and straits from the want of men. After the last great war the strength of the Navy fell to 50,000, and in war time it had been rapidly raised to 120,000. It was obvious, therefore, that a much larger increase than the 8,000 he had given would be required. For both Army and Navy all soldiers and sailors must recognise the necessity of having a trained, or semi-trained, Reserve to fall back upon. Right hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House had done a great deal to improve the condition of the Navy; but the attention of the Admiralty was still further required to increasing the Reserve, an important measure which could be carried out at very small cost. These 26,000 men cost something like £205,000, as against the cost of 50,000 men employed in the Fleet. If it was possible to get even a semi-trained body of men to fall back upon it was well worth the Admiralty's while to consider whether they should not extend the endeavours they had already made in that direction. The conclusion he had arrived at was that the nominal Reserve, at present numbering about 26,000 persons, in reality left only about 20,000 men available, a number hardly likely to supply the ordinary waste which would occur in time of war. That being so, it was necessary to cast about for possible fields from which to draw additional Reserves.

There was, first of all, the Mercantile Marine; but the Committee to which he had referred thought we could hardly expect materially to increase the 10,000 men already drawn from that source. The second-class Reserve, also numbering approximately 10,000 men, were mainly drawn from the fishing population, and that seemed one of the most likely and desirable fields from which additional Reserves might be drawn. The conditions under which the second-class Reserve men were invited to join were not very favourable, but he hoped that certain changes in these conditions being made, a few thousand more men would be obtained from the fishing population. Probably firemen could not be obtained from any other source than the Mercantile Marine, but they might be recruited in considerably larger numbers. Another source whence men might be secured was to be found in the bluejackets and marines who had left the Service at the end of their first 10 years' engagement. Those men were, on an average, about 30 years of age when they left the Service, and he thought that about 5,000 of these men could be obtained for service, and that they would constitute one of the best classes of the Reserve obtainable. He should like to know what were the objections of the Admiralty to make an offer to these men for another 15 or 20 years of service? As far as the quality of these men was concerned, he thought every one would agree that it was good, but the system of drill was not very favourable for getting well-drilled men when the time came to call them out. Too much reliance should not be placed upon the pensioners. Many of them were men getting on in years, though of course they were nominally available for service. With regard to the 5,000 men who might be obtained on leaving the Service at the end of their first 10 years' engagement, many people objected to any proposal which would hold out inducements to men to leave the Service and become Reserve men at the end of 10 years—that we should be losing even more of our good men than we do at present. At the same time, predominant weight ought to be given to the consideration that we ought to have large and well-drilled Reserves, such as existed in all other Armies and Navies, formed by

passing men more rapidly through the Service. He urged the right hon. Gentleman, therefore, to secure these valuable men, who would form the backbone of the Naval Reserve. The advantage in getting marines as well as bluejackets was that they also were well-drilled men, and used to ships. The system pursued at present was not calculated to obtain well-drilled men when the time came for calling them out. No doubt, a fair number of the men came up for their annual 28 days' drill. From a variety of causes, taking the whole Naval Reserve, they were by no means so proficient in their drill as the official Reports would lead people to suppose. The Admiralty deserved, he must say, much credit for the proposals in reference to the training of the men, which were very valuable, and he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon them. He should, however, like to have some assurance that the Admiralty felt the necessity of providing a large and full reserve—one upon which they could count, and that they should have it well drilled. If that were so, the country generally would feel much greater satisfaction. Having concluded this part of his remarks—and he must say that he had not hostilely criticised the Reserve—he would pass on to another question of reserves—not of men, but of ammunition. He was sorry to say that upon that point there was some reasonable fault to find. But he was in the difficulty that he could not very well give the details he might happen to know about the quantities of ammunition at disposal. As a matter of fact, he thought his right hon. Friend would admit that the reserve ammunition had been allowed to fall considerably below the mark at which it ought to stand. He believed that in the last year or 18 months some increase had been made in the stocks at Malta, Gibraltar, and other places, but a short time ago they were certainly below what they ought to be. He would not go into details upon this matter, but the Government could not expect them to pass over in silence so significant a matter. What did it mean? It meant that when action took place abroad, and ships went to get their stores, they would find nothing like the quantity they wanted. Let them,

Commander Bethell

for goodness sake, whatever else they did, keep a good reserve of ammunition! The supplies of ammunition and of coals should alike be looked after. Ships were of no use without ammunition and coal. He would not pursue that question further, but cherished the hope that the Admiralty were fully alive to the urgency of the matter.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, that at this hour of the night he did not intend to make any remarks at great length. He was quite willing to be amiable if the right hon. Gentleman would only meet him, and would be briefer than he intended if he would only listen to a logical argument. They had been for five hours listening to dockyard grievances and discussing dockyard matters. He ventured to think that the dockyards existed for the good of the Service, and not the Service for the good of the dockyard; but measuring their relative importance by the length of discussion, one would imagine that the dockyards were of paramount importance, and the Navy of very second-rate importance indeed. Why did the Government listen to dockyard grievances? Because there was a concentrated voting power. He and his brother officers had brought grievances before the House over and over again. Last year he did so, and had done so so often that he was sick of doing it any more. They had been given a hearing, and sometimes a smile from the Treasury Bench, but that was all. The next year came, and they went over the same process. Now if the right hon. Gentleman would say that these things should be referred to the Committee now sitting, presided over by the late Sea Lord, he would sit down at once, because he agreed that that was not the place to ventilate their grievances in detail. The men in the Coastguard complained that they were not given the 2d. per day re-engagement money after 10 years; officers of the Coastguard and chief boatmen were not given the sum to which they thought they were equitably entitled for new uniforms; to second-class leading stokers the 2d. per day re-engagement money was refused, nor did leading stokers get an increase of pay of 3d. per day at the end of four years; chief engine-room artificers claimed that a limited

number amongst them ought certainly to have warrant rank; warrant officers wished to be granted the titles of fleet gunner, fleet boatswain, or fleet carpenter. These were all grievances which might all be referred to the Committee if the right hon. Gentleman would only say so. With regard to the transport service, a very delicate question had been asked by the right hon. Member for the Ormskirk Division. He knew what the right hon. Member was aiming after. It was to abolish the Indian troopships and to get the troops carried in hired transports, and he would fight the hon. Gentleman upon that by-and-bye. He would venture to suggest a solution of that difficulty. It was to take the man-of-war-men out of troopships and fill up their places by Royal Naval Reserve men. Then they would have their Naval Reserve always available, and the best school for the training of stokers would still be kept going. The officers would also benefit, for the troopships were coming and going in bad weather, and there was plenty of experience to be gained on board of them. There was another point. He had asked for a Return of the waste of seamen of the Royal Navy at the end of 10 years, but he was told it would take up too much time to prepare. Therefore, he had to guess what became of them. One-third of them returned, one-third went into civil life, and they hoped the other third went into the Naval Reserve. He strongly impressed upon the right hon. Gentleman the necessity of looking after these men, so that they should not be lost. Whether it was 500 or 1,000 a year or less it was very necessary to look after them, for they were the most valuable men that they had leaving the Service at the end of 10 years. There was no reason why they should not be induced to enter the Fleet Reserve. It was very hard that the men whose grievances he had been ventilating should have a deaf ear turned to those grievances merely because they could not concentrate their votes in a dockyard town. On their behalf he ventured to appeal to Her Majesty's Government, and he hoped he would not appeal in vain.

MR. J. H. WILSON (Middlesbrough) said, he spoke as a Naval Reserve man who had served his time in the Royal

Naval Reserve and might claim to have some slight knowledge of the Reserve. He wanted to point out some reasons why British seamen would not enrol with the Reserve. They had been told of the necessity of building more ships, but his experience, as a practical seaman, was that before they built more ships they must have more men, and they must be practical men. Before they could be got to do so they would have to be convinced that in times of peace there would be a reasonable probability of their obtaining employment. So far from this being the case at present, the best men in the Mercantile Navy, which was the backbone of the country, were being ousted by foreigners. Only last week he read of one patriotic British firm who had discharged 400 men and employed Lascars in their place simply because the Government tried to give them protection under the Employers' Liability Act. That was the case of Smith Bros., of Glasgow, who received a large subsidy from the Government under a mail contract; and by-and-bye he should have to say something as to why the Trades Union rate of wages were not paid to the Lascars they employed. In addition to these Lascars large numbers of foreigners were employed on board ship, and he wanted to know how dare the Government ask the British seamen and firemen to enrol in the Naval Reserve to protect their property in the time of war when they would not give them employment in times of peace, because they asked for a living wage? Of course, they were told that preference was given to the foreigner because he was more reliable and more steady. Then why did not they man the Navy with foreigners? There were plenty of unemployed Germans, Swedes, Italians, and Greeks who would be glad to take the place of the British seamen. He was surprised that any sailor or fireman could be induced to join the Reserve at all under the conditions imposed. The three months which must now be served at sea every year interfered with the good employment which the best men of the Mercantile Marine could obtain on land. A sailor would not lose his seamanlike qualities because he had not been to sea for a year or two. He would be prepared to go on board ship

to-morrow and do his work as well as ever he did. The Admiralty had recently been enrolling a large number of stokers for the Reserve, and these were actually paid 3s. a week more than the able seamen who had gone through five years' training. The wages should be equal, though the stokers' wages should not be reduced. It was a miserable pittance enough for the men on whom the Government must rely in time of war, because they had not got enough men by 10,000 to man present ships if they were put into commission. They might make their ships in three years, but they could not make their men in that time. Therefore, they would require an additional 5,000 or 6,000, and he wanted to know where they would get them from if they were not drawn from the Mercantile Marine? We were not making sailors in the Mercantile Marine. Very few ships carried apprentices. He thought the Government could alter that state of affairs; they could pass a law compelling shipowners to carry a certain number of apprentices on board their ships. Probably there were not more than 5,000 apprentices in the whole of the Mercantile Marine drafted over or stolen from foreign ships by the aid of the crimps. There would not be enough men even to man the Mercantile Marine. Another reason which deterred men from entering the Reserve was that the privilege of pension was not ensured to them until they were 60 years of age and after 20 years of service, and the pension itself was a very small one. Few Reserve seamen lived to get the pension, and, at the present time, although the pension scheme had existed 26 years, not more than 100 men were now in the enjoyment of it. It was difficult for any man over 45 years of age to get employment on British ships at all. When he showed the sign of grey hairs he was told he was not wanted. The Government would not suffer much by the reduction of age, for, after all, it was only a question of £12 a year. He thought if the Government refused to enter into mail contracts with any company except they carried a certain number of apprentices it would be a useful step to take. He thought the Government might also give further encouragement to Naval Reserve officers,

Mr. J. H. Wilson

who would be very useful in case of war. Then, again, if they wanted to encourage seamen to join the Navy, they must improve the conditions existing in the Navy. If they compared the life of a sailor with that of a soldier, he ventured to say that the soldier's condition was much better than that of any seaman in the Royal Navy. There was not so much tyranny practised, for one thing, upon the soldier as upon the sailor. They would have to improve the condition of the men in the Navy all round before they would be able to induce the men to come from the Mercantile Marine into the Navy. The food supply also wanted to be improved, for now it is far from being satisfactory. He thought the question of promotion ought to be equally considered. The men in the Navy had not the same opportunities of promotion as in the Army, and he said it was about time that in this country it became possible for a man on board ship to go from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest. He hoped the Government would do their best to bring about reforms with a view of encouraging employment for the British seamen in times of peace. The seamen for over 16 years had been agitating outside the House of Commons for the pension age to be reduced from 60 to 50, but no attention had been paid by either Liberal or Tory Government to that demand. Now that they had a Liberal Government in power which was doing justice to Government *employés*, he was sure the claim of seamen would not go unheeded, and that what could be done would be done on their behalf.

*SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said he, in common with many Members, had been much disappointed by the speech he had just heard, because he had hoped that from a practical seaman they would have had something better than a speech which was purely theoretical and in the clouds. The hon. Member had spoken of the employment of foreigners in the Mercantile Marine. He spoke in evident ignorance of the facts, and did not know that shipowners had stated over and over again that they were often obliged to employ foreigners, because strikes were fomented in this as in other industries, not in consequence of the industrial necessities of the situation

but because professional agitators chose to interfere in order to make money for themselves. Alluding to other equally strange statements in the hon. Member's speech, he said, the fact, however, remained, that at the present moment more men were offering their services as seamen and firemen in the Royal Navy than could be taken on.

MR. J. H. WILSON: The seamen are not offering their services, but the superintendents in the Mercantile Marine offices are being paid so much for every man they can entrap into the Naval Reserve.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I am certain that is not the case.

MR. J. H. WILSON: I say it is true.

*SIR G. BADEN-POWELL said, it was a very grave accusation to bring against any Government that they entrap men for any purpose whatever, and he would leave the Representative of the Government to deal with that accusation. What he wanted to come to was the actual condition of the Royal Naval Reserve, and he hoped they would pass from this cloudy discussion of theory to the facts of the case. For many years past he had taken an interest in the Royal Naval Reserve, and all his life he had had much to do with seamen. It was probably not very well known that in yachts there were employed something like 25,000 to 28,000 men who were capable seamen—a class not yet drawn upon as reserves, and who ought to be most useful in the Navy. There were certain grievances of the men which ought to be remedied. The present Administration had carried to a successful issue some reforms initiated by the previous Administration. There were one or two points in respect to the firemen now pressing for consideration. One was the question of certificates of discharge, which had to be signed by the engineer before the men could receive their retaining fee. He thought it would be a great improvement if these firemen could receive the fee on the Board of Trade certificate of discharge instead of having to wait for the engineer. Another point was that the firemen desired to become, as far as possible, on a level with the combatant men on board ship. They would also like in the different ports to

have a representative appointed who should look after their interests, and look after both the registrations and applications and the money affairs of those already in the Service. Much observation and experience had strengthened him in the opinion that the Naval Reserve seamen were not so well treated as they ought to be. He ought to be put more on a par with the bluejackets of the Royal Navy. He had himself something to do with the fight for the retention for them of the uniform of the Royal Navy, and they managed to retain the jumpers. That might seem a small matter, but it had a considerable effect; and the more they could do to put the men on a level with the bluejackets the more grateful they would be. There was one great grievance this valuable Force had, and this was one which had been put by the hon. Member who last spoke, and that was the question of pensions. That affected them very seriously. Many a young man hesitated to join the Force because he knew his pension was very doubtful in the future. The one main point which militated against the present policy in regard to the Royal Naval Reserve was the total inadequacy of the numbers of the Reserve to meet the exigencies of the future. The Admiralty in their Memorandum said that the men came forward "in sufficient numbers," but this meant merely that the numbers were sufficient to reach an inadequate limit. Any Admiralty that wished to face the difficulties of the near future must create a larger Naval Reserve, and he trusted that the matter would receive the anxious consideration of the present Ministry. He himself would never let the question drop, and he had no doubt that he would be supported by many Members on both sides of the House. As to the officers of the Royal Naval Reserve, he had seen how much they benefited by going to sea for prolonged periods in men-of-war, and his experience was that the same remark applied to the men. Men who served a considerable time in a man-of-war acquired habits of discipline and got to understand the routine and the mechanism of a battleship. He was perfectly convinced that in the naval battles of the future the place where the nerve, the coolness and the courage would be most needed would be below decks,

in the midst of a mass of machinery. The work must be properly carried on below decks during an engagement as it was carried on in the engine room of the *Calliope* during the celebrated hurricane at Samoa in which every vessel but she was driven ashore. When one remembered how largely it would be necessary to depend upon the men of the Royal Naval Reserve below decks one saw at once how necessary it was that they should serve for considerable periods on board men-of-war. He was convinced from what he had seen of the officers of the Royal Naval Reserve that if the officers of our Mercantile Marine were favourable to the Reserve the men would follow them into it. Some of the very best seamen now living were the officers of great merchant ships. These men if they would enter the Royal Naval Reserve would be followed by the very best class of seamen, and he thought that everything that was possible ought to be done to promote the popularity of the Reserve with the officers. He was sorry that the action which had recently been taken in giving precedence to the officers of the Indian Marine over those of the Royal Naval Reserve had produced a bad effect on the Reserve, and he hoped that the just grievance felt by the officers of the Reserve on the subject would be done away with. He would say no more at present, but intended to do all that lay in his power to promote the interests of that most necessary portion of our Naval Forces, the Royal Naval Reserve.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he was entirely in accord with the hon. Member who had just sat down in regard to the pensions of the Royal Naval Reserve. He himself brought the matter forward last year, and strongly urged that the pensions should be given at an earlier age than 60. The suggestion was, however, airily and loftily dismissed, as probably it would be again dismissed to-night, by the Secretary to the Admiralty. An hon. Member had put to himself the question why seamen would not join the Royal Naval Reserve; but none of the answers the hon. Member had given to the question were of any service, because at the present moment seamen did join the Royal Naval Reserve, which was practically full. The same observation

applied to the Navy. The Admiralty could always get more candidates for the Navy than they could get into it. His hon. and gallant Friend (Commander Bethell) had suggested that there would be a difficulty in filling up the Navy from the Mercantile Marine in time of war, inasmuch as the rate of wages in the Mercantile Marine would at such a time be considerably advanced. He (Mr. Bowles) believed that the contrary would be the case. Under the Declaration of Paris we should be bound in case of war to give up our carrying trade, and the whole of our trade would necessarily have to go into neutral bottoms. The result would be that our vessels would have to be laid up, and our seamen instead of getting more employment and higher wages would get none at all.

COMMANDER BTHELL was understood to say that his hon. Friend had misunderstood his point.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES went on to say that he should like some explanation as to how it was proposed to draft 800 seamen direct from the Mercantile Marine into the Royal Navy. He saw with some apprehension and dismay that it was proposed to commence seven battleships all of which, as he understood, were to follow the lines of the *Magnificent* and the *Majestic*. These were ships of 15,000 tons, 390 feet long, and having a draught of $27\frac{1}{2}$ feet. These large ships were copied from the foreigners. The whole of our naval history showed that the best ship did not increase in power relatively to her size. A ship of 15,000 tons was not twice as good as a ship of 7,000 tons. In all probability two ships of 7,000 tons, if properly handled, would capture a ship of 15,000 tons. This was the history of the Spanish Armada, and of many a fight in which British seamen in small vessels had captured large ships. Another advantage of having small ships was that two ships could be in two places at the same time, whilst obviously one ship, however large, could not. Then as to the draught, $27\frac{1}{2}$ feet were close upon five fathoms, and a ship of such draught would be unable to undertake a very large number of services that might be required of it. It would be prevented from approaching any shallow coast

Sir G. Baden-Powell

whatever, and it would be unable to go through the Suez Canal.

MR. J. H. WILSON, rising to Order, asked whether the question of ships or that of men was before the House?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER called upon Mr. Bowles to proceed.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he was discussing the general question, which he had a right to do, as the hon. Member would learn when he had acquainted himself a little further with the Rules of the House. The hon. Member went on to say that the Secretary to the Admiralty had learnt from his predecessor the very bad habit of increasing the Contract Vote by something like £200,000 beyond the amount that was to be spent in order to apply it either to the relief of other Votes or to purposes for which no Vote was made by Parliament. He observed that it was proposed to obtain the sanction of Parliament to the commencement of several large works at Portland. He understood that what it was proposed to do was to build out a breakwater from the Weymouth side towards the end of the existing Portland breakwater, and that the works would last for 10 years and cost £1,000,000. [Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH dissented.] He was glad to observe that his information was inaccurate, but the statement was published in *The United Service Magazine*, over which he understood the right hon. Gentleman exercised the supervision of a careful editor. At all events, the works were to be undertaken to protect vessels against torpedo attacks. There were three objections to the proposal. The first was that it would interfere with the mobility of the ships, which would be unable to get out of or into Portland Roads with the same ease as at present. They would be boxed up under the breakwater; and would form a splendid mark for a vessel which might be itself below the horizon. The second objection to the proposal was that if the breakwater were built up to high-water mark they would be unable at low water to fire their guns over the breakwater, as the tide fell 25 or 30 feet at Portland. Whilst the breakwater would act as a defence against attacks of the present torpedoes, it would give no defence against aerial torpedoes, which were now being developed in so

extraordinary a manner. A third objection to the proposal was that it would necessitate land defences. Lord Spencer's Memorandum stated that the system was being further resorted to of putting seamen in barracks on shore. This was a very bad system indeed. A practised seaman who went ashore very soon lost the seaman's habit. His view was that seamen ought to live on ships and acquire and maintain seafaring habits. He admitted that the system of housing men in barracks was convenient, and that it was rather good for the health of the men; but, at the same time, the first thing that was required of a seaman was that he should be a seaman, and a seaman soon ceased to be one if he lived on shore. He was glad that the Government had recognised the necessity for increasing the naval armaments, but he agreed with the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. J. H. Wilson) that their first object ought to be to get men, because the Admiralty could build ships more rapidly than they could obtain men. Unless they had men ready to man the ships when they were built they would be so much useless ironmongery on their hands. That being so, he trusted that the Secretary to the Admiralty would be able to tell the House that he had made some arrangement to provide men for the new vessels.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I wish to consult the convenience of the House as to the conduct of this Debate. I had hoped to get the Deputy Speaker out of the Chair to-night; but I understand that it is not likely that that will be accomplished, and I want to come to some arrangement with reference to concluding the Debate and taking the Vote to-morrow. It is essential that this should be done if we are to adjourn the House at the period named. If the House agrees with me I shall not be disposed to press for the continuance of the Debate now.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The arrangement, as I understand, that was arrived at by mutual consent was that to-day and to-morrow were to be given to the discussion of these Estimates, and that to-morrow Vote A and Vote 1 were to be given to the Admiralty with such opportunity as may be required by the Admiralty for making a statement on those

Votes. I do not think there will be any advantage in continuing the discussion now. I think we should consult the convenience of the House by adjourning now, on the distinct understanding that to-morrow the Deputy Speaker shall leave the Chair; that the two Votes I have mentioned shall be taken, and that the Admiralty shall be enabled to make a statement upon them; but that arrangement must be distinctly adhered to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. Harland.)*

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [16th March] reported, and agreed to.—[See page 521.]

MOTIONS.

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, in pursuance of "The Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892," to increase the number of Magistrates in the Royal Burgh of North Berwick, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Sir George Trevelyan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 89.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Resolutions [16th March] reported, and agreed to.—[See page 556.]

Bill ordered to be brought in by The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time.

PLACES OF WORSHIP (SITES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John Ellis, Bill to give further facilities for the acquisition of Sites for Places of Worship, ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Billson, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Mr. Perks, Mr. Henry J. Wilson, and Mr. Carvell Williams.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 90.]

TRUST COMPANIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Bill to amend the Law affecting the formation of Trust Companies, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Colonel Howard Vincent, Mr. Lawrence, Major Rasch, and Mr. Henniker Heaton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 93.]

Lord G. Hamilton

FOOD ADULTERATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Adulteration of Food, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Mr. Brooke Robinson, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Barrow, and Mr. Graham.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 92.]

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Neville, Bill to amend "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854," and the Acts amending the same, and "The Shipping Casualties Investigation Act, 1879," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Neville, Mr. Willox, and Mr. W. F. D. Smith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 91.]

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES' REGISTER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Clough, Bill to enable the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies to remove the names of companies from the register in certain cases, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Clough and Mr. Kimber.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 94.]

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, CODE 1894.

Copy presented,—of Code of Regulations for Day Schools, with Schedules and Appendices, by the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Copy presented,—of Revised Instructions issued to Her Majesty's Inspectors and applicable to the Code of 1894 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EXTRADITION.

Copy presented,—of Order in Council dated 10th March 1894, giving effect to a Treaty concluded on the 16th December 1892, the Ratifications of which were exchanged on 31st January 1894 between Her Majesty and the President of the Republic of Liberia, for the mutual Extradition of Fugitive Criminals [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).

Copy presented,—of Return of Proceedings during the month of December 1893 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 20th March 1894.

Their Lordships met for the despatch of Judicial Business only.

House adjourned at Four o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 20th March 1894.

The House met at half after One of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of this indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

THE INDIAN OPIUM COMMISSION.

SIR G. CHESNEY (Oxford) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, with reference to the proceedings of the Opium Commission as reported in the newspapers, Her Majesty's Government are able to announce that no part of the cost of that Commission shall be borne by the Revenues of India ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) : There is no intention of departing from the arrangement arrived at last year as to the distribution between the Indian and the British Exchequer of the cost of the Opium Commission, which was communicated to the House by the late Prime Minister.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) : May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if there is any precedent for charging the Revenues of India with any portion of the cost of a Commission issued for this country, which was neither asked for nor desired by India ?

MR. H. H. FOWLER : If notice is given of that question I will investigate the matter.

SCOTCH SECONDARY EDUCATION GRANTS.

SIR D. MACFARLANE : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a Memorial from Lismore and Appin with reference to the action of the County Committee in the allocation of the Secondary Education grants ; and whether he will take any steps to remedy the omission of the important schools in the district of Ballachulish ?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) : I have received the Memorial referred to, and have carefully considered it, and communicated in regard to it with the County Committee. That Committee felt themselves obliged to recognise the claims of the various parts of the county, and the grounds which they showed in support of their scheme was so strong that I did not feel justified in setting aside the proposals of this Committee, which is the Local Authority, and have accordingly approved the scheme.

DUNDEE TAILORING TRADE.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the number of employers in the tailoring trade in Dundee who employ outworkers, and the number of outworkers employed by them ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : Twenty-one employers in the tailoring trade in Dundee employ outworkers. The total number of outworkers employed by them is 48.

DONEGAL SESSIONAL CROWN SOLICITOR.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what are the facts connected with the suspension of

Mr. John Mackey, Sessional Crown Solicitor for Donegal; and could the depositions in the case be presented to Parliament?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The accused man, having pleaded guilty to a charge of common assault on a young woman, was allowed by the County Court Judge to stand out on his own recognisance to come up for judgment on receiving 10 days' notice. The Attorney General has directed the Crown Solicitor to serve this notice. Pending the final determination of the case at the coming April Sessions, it is necessary to avoid prejudicing its result by Parliamentary discussion or by presenting the depositions to Parliament.

KILRUSH GAS COMPANY.

MR. MAGUIRE (Clare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the claims made by the Local Government Board against the Town Commissioners of Kilrush in connection with promoting a Provisional Order in reference to the purchase of the works of the Kilrush Gas Company; and whether he will take steps to have the claim reduced?

MR. J. MORLEY: The expenses referred to in this question were law costs incurred by the Local Government Board on behalf of the Town Commissioners in connection with a Provisional Order empowering them to acquire the gas works, and to undertake the supply of gas to the district. The Order, as confirmed by Act of Parliament, provides that all the costs incidental to the preparation and confirmation of the Order shall be paid by the Commissioners, and these costs—duly taxed and amounting to less than £30—were advanced to the Exchequer by the Local Government Board on behalf of the Commissioners. The Board have no power to reduce the amount of their claim upon the Commissioners as requested.

LISBURN REGISTRAR OF DEATHS.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Registrar of Deaths in Lisburn, County Antrim, has refused to issue certificates in the case of death of

members of the National Foresters branch there until he wrote to the Registrar of Friendly Societies to know if the branch was registered, refusing to take the printed copy of Rules as evidence, thereby causing much inconvenience to the relatives of the deceased who were kept six days without the money required for burial purposes, it being an offence under the Friendly Societies Act for any Society to pay money except on production of the certificate; and if the Government will undertake to prevent such action on the part of any Registrar of Deaths?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Registrar General reports that in the last printed list of Registered Friendly Societies there appears an entry of a branch whose registered address is "Smithfield, Lisburn." If the party belonged to this branch and produced a printed copy of the Rules and card of membership, the local Registrar should have issued the certificate on the proper form without further inquiry. If, however, the Registrar had any reasonable doubt as to the registration of any particular Society he is directed by instructions to apply to the Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies. Further inquiry is now being made into the matter.

LONDONDERRY GAOL.

MR. MAINS (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Patrick M'Keefery, a prisoner in Londonderry Gaol, who, while engaged as fatigue man under the supervision of a warder, in removing oakum had to pass a gas jet, and, through no carelessness on his part, the oakum took fire, and that while, by order of the warder, he strove to extinguish it, he was very severely burnt, and had to remain in hospital until his discharge; whether he is aware that, on an application being made to the General Prisons Board, Dublin Castle, on behalf of M'Keefery, for compensation for the injuries he had received, an offer was made to him of £5 in full discharge of any claim he had against them; and if, under the circumstances, the Prisons Board could be induced to give a more adequate compensation to the man?

Mr. T. M. Healy

MR. J. MORLEY : The facts are generally as stated in the question. The matter was fully inquired into at the time by an Inspector of the General Prisons Board, who were not satisfied that M'Keefery was altogether free from blame. The burns on the prisoner only extended to his hands and part of his arm, and none of them were deep, except on the back of the hands, where the skin was superficially destroyed. The medical officer of the prison states that the burns were all healed at the time of prisoner's discharge. Application for compensation having been made on behalf of M'Keefery, Government were advised that he should be offered a sum of £5 in full compensation for the injuries received by him. This offer has been refused, and Government have no authority to increase the amount as suggested; however, I will look into the matter and see whether anything can be done.

NAVAN REVISION COURT.

MR. GIBNEY (Meath, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Navan relieving officer, at the request of the clerk of the Union, did five days' duty last October in the Revision Court, in the belief that he would be paid for the extra work; and that the Guardians were most anxious to remunerate him, but the Local Government Board refused to sanction this; and will he inquire into the circumstances?

MR. J. MORLEY : The Local Government Board were advised that payments could not be legally made out of the rates to relieving officers for attending at the Revision Courts, and it was not therefore within the power of the Board to sanction the payments referred to in this question.

RURAL POSTMEN.

MR. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether rural postmen at sub-offices are placed at a disadvantage in comparison with postmen employed in town as concerns medical treatment; and, if so, whether steps can be taken to allow of medical attendance and supply of medicine to all servants of the Department alike whose pay does not exceed £150 a year?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : The Department is constantly extending its medical system as opportunity offers; but, paid as its medical officers are by means of a capitation allowance in respect to each man placed under their charge, it will be obvious that the system cannot be established except where Post Office servants are employed in sufficient numbers. Where this is the case, for attendance on one Post Office servant who is ill, even if the illness be of some duration, the medical officer finds compensation in not having to attend others whose health remains good; but, of course, such a system as this, depending as it does upon averages, is not adapted to places where Post Office servants are employed singly or in twos and threes. Under these circumstances, I fear I can hold out no hope that any system will be adopted which would supply every Post Office servant in the Kingdom whose pay does not exceed £150 with medicine and medical attendance gratuitously.

TORPEDO-BOAT CONTRACTS.

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, S.E., Ince) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty of what do the contracts of Messrs. Thorneycroft, torpedo-boat builders, Chiswick, consist; when each contract commenced and terminates; what is the money value of each contract; and whether they are higher or lower than the contracts of other firms?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : The Admiralty have contracts with Messrs. Thorneycroft for five torpedo-boat destroyers and three torpedo-boats. I shall be glad if the hon. Member will confer with me as to the other points in his question.

SCHOOL BOOKS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether School Boards have power to enforce payment for school books; whether he is aware that payment is enforced in numerous districts in Scotland; and whether any representation has been, or can be, made on the subject by the Education Department?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) : In answer to previous

questions, I have already stated that an adequate supply of school books is necessary for the efficiency of a school upon which efficiency the grant depends; and that it is not consistent with Regulations providing for the relief of fees that a fixed charge for the use of books should be made. The Department is prepared to deal with any case in which either of these conditions is infringed. But the case is different when the property in the books is acquired by the children, and the Department is not, therefore, prepared to lay down any rule which can be universally applied.

LEGISLATION ON VACCINATION.

MR. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to bring in again the Bill to carry out the Fifth Report of the Royal Commissioners on Vaccination in favour of abolishing repeated prosecutions for neglect to vaccinate, and recommending that the parents committed to prison should no longer be treated as criminals?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): After the experience of last Session, I fear that it is impossible to hope that this Bill, although it merely gives effect to the unanimous recommendation of a Royal Commission, would be treated as non-contentious. If it is not so treated, it has no chance of passing into law, and it would be a waste of time to introduce it.

THRASHING BLACKS IN THE TRANSVAAL.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been directed to a statement in *The Standard and Diggers' News*, a Johannesburg paper, which claims to represent the views of English settlers in the Transvaal, to the effect that 48 boys, of various colours, arrested for walking on the footpaths, had been sentenced to receive 10 lashes each for so doing; that the punishment was inflicted with a cat consisting of an ordinary two-foot stick with nine tails of stout twine, each with some knots and some two feet in length, the cat being previously dipped in a bucket of salt and water; and that

a pannikin of salt and water was thrown over each boy at the end; and whether the Government will take the needful steps to secure fair treatment of the black population in the adjacent British territory?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have seen the statement referred to in *The Standard and Diggers' News*. I am not aware, however, that that paper especially represents the views of British settlers in the Transvaal. There is, so far as I know, no similar law with regard to the flogging of natives in any of the British Possessions adjacent to the South African Republic, and I am not aware that any special steps are needed to secure fair treatment to the black population in these territories.

HOURS OF LABOUR IN SHOPS.

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's): In the absence of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposed to take to give effect to the Resolution of the House, unanimously passed on the 21st March last, that the hours of labour in shops are excessive and unnecessary, and that it is desirable to enable Local Authorities to carry out the general wishes of the shopkeeping community as to the hours of closing?

MR. ASQUITH: I am anxious that effect should be given to this Resolution. But, so far as the Government are concerned, the pressure of other claims makes it impossible for me to hope that they can introduce legislation on the subject during the present Session.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

MR. ANSTRUTHER: On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Member for London University, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when a reply may be expected to the Memorials from the clerks of the Second Division of the Civil Service, which were sent to the Treasury during the Autumn of last year?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): It is no more than four years ago that the whole conditions of service of Second Division clerks were revised and greatly

improved in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments. Those recommendations are being steadily carried out, and the Treasury does not consider that a case has been made out for any general revision of the settlement of 1890 such as the Memorialists desire. In these circumstances, it has not been thought necessary to issue a Circular upon the question.

COLONEL RICH'S PENSION CLAIM.

SIR G. CHESNEY : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, with reference to the announcement made by him last Session as to the pension claims allowed to Colonel Rich and others, he is now able to state when the pensions of these officers will be adjusted on the basis of that decision ?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : With one exception, as to which some points remain to be considered, all the cases which have come before the Treasury have already been adjusted, including that of Colonel Rich.

TRAINING SHIPS FOR IRELAND.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the fact that a considerable number of boys from West Cork enter the Naval Service, and that Bantry Bay is frequently used for Naval Manœuvres, he will consider the advisability of establishing a training ship in Bantry Bay ?

DR. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore) : At the same time, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will devote an obsolete ship to the establishment of a Naval Training School in Cork Harbour ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : It is not intended to increase the number of boys' training ships at present. Should this become desirable in the future, the suitability of Cork Harbour and Bantry Bay for the establishment of a Boys' Training School will be considered.

DR. FOX : Is it not a fact that there is a training ship at Belfast ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : Not at present.

MILITARY WORKS IN BANTRY BAY.

MR. GILHOOLY : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether fortifications are to be erected on Bere Island,

Bantry Bay ; and, if so, when it is probable they will be commenced ?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : It is in contemplation to strengthen the fortifications in the South-West of Ireland, and it is possible that Bantry Bay may be included in the scheme of defence ; but it would at present be premature to specify localities for the works.

THE PROPOSED IRISH AGRICULTURAL BOARD.

MR. FIELD : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government will appoint a Committee to inquire into the necessity of a Board of Agriculture for Ireland ; and whether he is aware that such a Committee sat previous to the establishment of the Board of Agriculture for Great Britain ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I answered a similar question on the 14th of March. It certainly is not my intention to ask the House to appoint a Committee to inquire into the necessity of a Board of Agriculture for Ireland until the inquiry into the working of the Land Acts has been completed.

MR. FIELD : The point is, will the Government favourably consider the matter ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I have told the hon. Member more than once that the Government have had it under consideration.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) : When will the Select Committee be appointed ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The Order of Reference has been on the Paper some time, and the delay in appointing the Committee is due to no fault of mine. There are, however, difficulties for the moment in the way of the nomination of Members, and those difficulties do not arise on this side of the House.

EMIGRANTS' INFORMATION OFFICE.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the passage in the Report of the Emigrants' Information Office for the past year, in which it is stated that the organisation of the Office is so small,

and its work depends already so much on voluntary effort, that it is impossible for the Committee to undertake as much as they could wish; but they are sensible that there is at present a great want of good practical guidance for young men who are prepared to take a little capital out to one or other of the tropical colonies of Great Britain; and whether any action is contemplated with a view to improving the efficiency of the Office and meeting the particular requirements referred to?

MR. S. BUXTON: The Governors of the tropical colonies are about to be asked to send home more information likely to give guidance to the class referred to than has hitherto been the case; and, with the same end in view, the Secretary of State has lately invited a gentleman closely connected with the West Indies to join the Managing Committee of the Emigrants' Information Office; but he is not prepared to state definitely at present what further steps, if any, can be taken to increase the efficiency of the Office, whose valuable work, which is in great measure dependent on the zeal and activity of members of the Committee, who voluntarily give their services, is much appreciated by the Government, as well as by those for whose benefit the Office was established.

DRILL IN NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in clearing for action, as periodically practised on Her Majesty's ships, all those things are habitually done which would have to be done on actually going into action, such as removing bulkheads and furniture from cabins with guns in them, disposing of boats and torpedo-boats, and providing and fitting splinter nets, where necessary; whether, in the case of ships carrying torpedo-boats, provision is made to provide a sufficient complement of men for them to be sent away if necessary from the ship during action; whether the signalmen of Her Majesty's ships would in action be posted under cover or would be left to work exposed, and whether they are posted at tactics as they would be or otherwise than they would be in action; and whether the water-tight bulkheads and doors in Her Majesty's

ships are in all cases or generally of such strength as would enable them to bear the weight of water in case of a compartment on one side of them becoming filled without the bulkhead being shored up on the other side?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH:

(1) The captain makes such arrangements as he thinks most desirable. (2) The complements approved are considered sufficient to meet the requirements of the Service in action or otherwise. (3) Signalmen would be posted in the position considered by the captain to be most convenient for carrying out their duties. (4) The water-tight bulkheads and doors are generally made of adequate strength for the purpose described. It is within the discretion of the captain to give additional support by shoring if he considers it desirable.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will the right hon. Gentleman for once give us a candid and straightforward answer to the questions I have asked?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think that is language that ought to be used.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer my questions? I press for an answer; I am entitled to one. If the right hon. Gentleman refuses to give an answer let him absolutely, plainly, and straightforwardly say so.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I have nothing to add to the answer I have already given except this—that if the hon. Member wishes to convey any suggestion or instruction to the Board of Admiralty or to the commanders of Her Majesty's Navy on the subject of their duties in the preparation of the fleet for battle we shall receive his suggestions and give them the consideration they deserve.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: The right hon. Gentleman's insinuation is absolutely unwarranted and unwarrantable.

OIL FUEL FOR THE NAVY.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have come to any conclusion as to the suitability of oil fuel for use in Her Majesty's ships; and, if so, whether he will state what that conclusion is?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : The conclusion arrived at by the Admiralty is that, for the present, it is undesirable to adopt liquid fuel for use on board Her Majesty's ships.

CONDEMNED RATIONS FOR THE NAVY.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state if any person has been held responsible for the sum of £588, a loss to the Public Service caused by the condemnation of 22,262 lbs. of salt pork, originally delivered at Haulbowline Yard, and condemned at Devonport, at Gosport, and at Plymouth in 1892-3, prior to the expiration of the two years' warranty given by the contractors; and what steps, if any, have been, or will be, taken to enforce the responsibility?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : No person could be held responsible, as the causes which led to the unfitness of the pork for issue, and to the consequent condemnation, could not be definitely ascertained. With the consent of the Treasury the loss was written off as irrecoverable. The Treasury Solicitor was of opinion that the warranty was, under the circumstances, inoperative.

PONDOLAND.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the terms of the arrangements for the annexation of Pondoland are finally settled; whether the territories held by the Chief Sigcan are to be annexed to the Colony of Natal; and whether any direct local responsibilities are left to the Imperial Government, or whether the whole of the duties of government are relegated to the Responsible Governments of the Cape Colony and Natal?

MR. S. BUXTON : The Chiefs of East and West Pondoland have just signed a deed making a cession of the whole of their country, and Sir Henry Loch has issued a Proclamation accepting the cession and declaring the country British territory. No official information has been received as to details. It was laid down by Her Majesty's late Government in 1886, and again in 1888 (see Blue Books 5022 and 5410), that

Pondoland could not be united with Natal except with the concurrence of the Cape Government, and I have no information showing that such consent is likely to be obtained. It is not contemplated that the Imperial Government should bear any responsibility for the administration of Pondoland; but that, as in the case of all the other Transkei districts, the responsibility should be borne by the Cape Colony.

THE C DIVISION, METROPOLITAN POLICE.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to an article in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of the 17th instant, entitled "Why the C Division is demoralised" (meaning the C Division of the Metropolitan Police), in which allegations of gross misconduct are made against the members of the said C Division; and whether, in the interests of the Force as well as of the public, he will cause an inquiry to be made into the accuracy of such allegations?

MR. ASQUITH : My attention has been called to the article, and, after communication with the Chief Commissioner, I am able to state that the whole story is untrue from beginning to end. The Division is in a high state of discipline under the superintendence of an officer second to none in the whole Force, and regular visits are paid to the locality referred to by superior officers both by day and night.

DUBLIN POST OFFICE.

MR. FIELD : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the recent selections for assistant bank officer and assistant desk clerk in the Dublin Post Office have yet been confirmed, and if he is aware that the gentleman selected for the first-named position is junior to 156 other officers, and the gentleman selected for the other position is still more junior; and whether there is any special reason why gentlemen with only two years' experience of the sorting office should be promoted above officers of over 10 years' experience?

***MR. A. MORLEY :** I am making inquiries on this subject, and will let the hon. Member know the result.

"INJURIES" TO RAILWAY SERVANTS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, as it would appear probable from Return 502, Session 1893-4, that the Returns of the Railway Companies as to "injuries" to their workmen are based upon widely different interpretations of that word, and comparison of the figures is to some extent vitiated in consequence, the Board of Trade will take early and effectual steps to induce the Railway Companies to come to such an agreement as will render their Returns as to injuries to their workmen more accurate?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (MR. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : Yes, Sir ; I agree with my hon. Friend, and communications have already been directed to the Railway Association with this object, and I propose to appoint a small Departmental Committee to consider the question.

SCOTTISH PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government propose to deal this Session with the question of Private Bill Legislation for Scotland?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (SIR G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) : I do not see any prospect of this question being dealt with in the course of the present Session.

SCARCITY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

MR. HARRY FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will issue a Circular of Inquiry to all Her Majesty's Inspectors, asking, in general terms, for their experience in respect to the alleged existence of serious and rapidly-growing scarcity among the various classes of elementary teachers, particularly having regard to the very large increase in school attendance since the passing of the Free Education Act ; and whether he will print their replies in full and lay them before Parliament in time to be considered before the discussion of the New Code?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (MR. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) : I have so lately made inquiries on this matter generally from the Inspectors that I am unable to issue another Circular. The results of the inquiry are embodied in the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Oxford University on the 24th November and 5th December last. I shall be glad to give the hon. Gentleman any further information if necessary beyond what is contained in those answers, and in my answer to the hon. Member himself on the 29th December last.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL FINANCES.

MR. HARRY FOSTER : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware of the fact that in a large number of voluntary schools it is necessary for the managers to become personally responsible to bankers for overdrafts necessary to meet the annual expenditure incurred in efficiently maintaining the schools pending the receipt of the annual grant ; whether he will consider the wisdom of recommending an alteration of the existing method of payment, so that semi-annually a payment of one-half or one-third of the grant based on an average of the preceding years shall be paid, thereby greatly facilitating the work of the voluntary schools, and putting them on a more equal footing with the Board schools of the Kingdom ; and whether, in any case, he will impress upon Her Majesty's Inspectors the necessity of sending in their Reports promptly, so that no avoidable delay may occur in the payments of the grants?

MR. ACLAND : I am aware of the fact stated in the first paragraph of the question. In answer to the second paragraph, it is not possible to make any difference between the mode of payment to Board and voluntary schools. The difficulty in making any payment of the kind indicated, is that the inspection on which the grants depend cannot be held more than once a year, and if an advance were made it might be ascertained at the end of the year that no grant whatever was due, and the State would lose the amount of the advance. The Department has constantly impressed upon

the Inspectors the necessity of sending in their Reports promptly. But I have no objection to issuing further directions to them to that effect.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL GRANTS WITHHELD.

MR. HARRY FOSTER: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he has taken any steps to ascertain the number of cases in which payment of the annual grant has been withheld in voluntary schools upon requisitions by the Department as to structural or other alterations of which no previous notice had been given by the Department; and whether he has given instructions, in accordance with the promise recently given by him, that, except for grave cases of emergency, the grant is not in future to be withheld, and an undertaking enforced in any such cases?

MR. ACLAND: I have not taken any further steps beyond the promise of a Return to the noble Lord the Member for Rochester, on Friday last. As I stated on that day, the grant will not be withheld except in serious cases.

MR. HARRY FOSTER: The right hon. Gentleman says "except in serious cases." Does he mean by that cases of insanitation?

MR. ACLAND: I mean it in a general sense. I referred to this matter in my remarks on Friday.

THE LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS.

MR. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he intends to introduce and press forward this Session a Bill amending the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, with a view to shortening and cheapening the procedure prescribed by those enactments; and, if not, whether he will give facilities for the passage of such a Bill through the House if introduced by a private Member?

MR. J. MORLEY: It would, I fear, be quite impossible for the Government to introduce a Bill having for its object the amendment of the Labourers Acts, and until I see the provisions of a Private Bill on the subject I cannot say anything with regard to it.

FRAUDS IN THE MEAT TRADE.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in the event of his deciding on the appointment of a Departmental Committee to inquire into the working of the Margarine and Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, he will include within the scope of the Inquiry the sufficiency or otherwise of the present law to check the fraudulent sale of foreign for home-fed meat?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I do not think that the two subjects to which my hon. Friend refers are of a sufficiently cognate character to render their consideration by the same Committee convenient, and I may remind my hon. Friend that a Select Committee of the other House was appointed last Session to consider the whole subject of the marking of imported agricultural and horticultural produce, and that we are in possession of the results of their inquiry so far as meat is concerned.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): Arising out of the answer, may I ask whether the Department have not received from the north and north-east of Scotland many complaints and resolutions about the sale of foreign meat professing to be Scotch-grown?

MR. GARDNER: Yes, Sir; many resolutions have been received by the Board of Agriculture on that subject from all parts of the Kingdom.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): And, in the meantime, will the right hon. Gentleman not take any steps to satisfy the discontent now felt as to the inefficiency of the present law?

MR. GARDNER: I have not said I am not prepared to take any steps; the matter is under the consideration of the Government.

THE WARINA COLLISION.

CAPTAIN BAGOT (Westmoreland, Kendal): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what progress has been made with the investigation into the unfortunate collision between British and French troops at Warina, Sierra Leone; and whether he is in a

position to give any information as to the results of such investigation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer the question. Reports have been received from Sierra Leone which all go to show that Lieutenant Maritz's attack on British troops in British territory was due to his having mistaken them for Sofas. No information has yet been communicated to us showing how he came to be operating against the Sofas in British territory.

CAPTAIN BAGOT: May I ask whether the question of compensation to the relatives of Englishmen killed in this unfortunate affair has yet been raised?

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): As three months have expired since this unfortunate incident occurred, and as the Government have received a full Report in writing from the Commander of the British Force, can the hon. Baronet hold out any hope of explanations being offered by the French Government at an early date?

SIR E. GREY: The facts we have received have been communicated to the French Government, who have expressed on their part a desire to make inquiries for themselves. There is no reason to suppose that the inquiries will be in any way unduly protracted, and as soon as they are completed no doubt the question of compensation will be arranged between the two Governments.

THE ANGLO-PORTUGUESE TREATY.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether or not the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty governing the construction of telegraphs and other facilities in Africa, and the collision on the Zambesi, gives such rights to each high contracting party as are reasonably necessary for the above purposes, and provides that any difference as to the execution of such rights shall be referred to arbitration; and whether or not such a difference was pending at the time such right was asserted by force?

SIR E. GREY: Rights, so far as may be reasonably required, are conferred by the 11th Article of the Treaty. A discussion as to the character of reasonable

requirements is proceeding. It began before the incident alluded to in the last paragraph is said to have occurred, and it includes the question whether the Article provides in the case in point for arbitration.

SCOTCH DISESTABLISHMENT.

MR. HOZIER: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government intend to deal this Session with the question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland; and, if so, whether they will introduce their Bill at the earliest possible moment, so that the people of Scotland may have some opportunity of considering its provisions before it comes on for discussion in the House?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Government will use all their endeavours to pass the Scottish measures referred to in the Queen's Speech. They will introduce those measures in ample time to enable them to be considered before the Second Reading. The first measure will be the Local Government Bill, which will be placed before the House on Monday week.

MR. HOZIER: I must ask for a definite answer to my question. Do the Government not intend to give the people of Scotland any adequate opportunity for considering their Disestablishment and Disendowment Bill?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have said that the Government would introduce their Scotch measures in ample time to enable them to be considered before Second Reading.

MR. HOZIER: What do the Government consider to be ample time for the people to discuss such a Bill?

MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): May I ask my right hon. Friend whether, looking to the fact that the Government have in the Local Veto Bill sanctioned the principle of reference to the people on the question of the liquor traffic, he will consider favourably the propriety of a reference to the electors of Scotland on the question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church before the Second Reading of the Bill?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I think the proper parallel to that would be to refer it to the inhabitants of every village to say whether they want an Established Church or not.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman puts the Church and the public-house on the same footing ?

[The question was not answered.]

IDLE POST OFFICE.

MR. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the postmen employed at the Idle Post Office, in the Shipley Division of the North West Riding of Yorkshire, are worked from 6.30 to 8 p.m., 13 and a-half hours per day, with scant intervals for meals, and for a weekly wage of 16s. ; and whether he can see his way to shorten these hours ?

*MR. A. MORLEY : I have no reason to believe that the facts stated in the question are true. The question only appeared on the Paper to-day, and I shall be obliged to call for a Report. I will inform the hon. Member of the result.

EVICTIIONS IN IRELAND.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that 40,000 Irish tenant farmers have been evicted under the process instituted by the late Government, 6,556 of these cases, together with 494 evictions by another process of law, having occurred within the year 1893 ; and whether he will consider it expedient, as a check to future evictions, and for the better government of Ireland, to insert a clause in the Evicted Tenants Bill which will make it compulsory on landlords to pay their tenants, in cases of eviction, the full value of the interest in their farms ?

MR. J. MORLEY : Down to the 31st December, 1893, there have been 43,457 ejectment notices under Section 7 of the Land Act of 1887, converting tenants into caretakers, served in Ireland. In the great majority of cases, however, these notices did not result in actual evictions. The number of ejectment notices served during the year 1893 was 6,526 ; but the number of tenants actually turned out of their houses on the holdings, after service of the notices, was 574, of whom 494 were tenants and 80 sub-tenants. The number of evictions under other processes of law in 1893 was 444. In answer to

the last part of the question, I cannot undertake to insert in the Bill a clause to the effect the hon. Member suggests.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.) : Arising out of that answer, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will consider the terms of Reference of the Committee, so that they may inquire into the working of Section 7 of the Act of 1887, which, I believe, will not come within the terms of Reference as they are at present drawn ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I am not quite sure whether the operation of Section 7 would come within the terms of Reference that I have put on the Paper, but I think it would. In any case, I am not prepared to extend those terms of Reference.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) : Are the terms of Reference intended to include an inquiry in the working of the Acts, as well as the principles embodied in them ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I think not, because the words mentioned in the terms of Reference are "The practice and principles of those Acts." I am not quite sure that I appreciate the substance of the distinction which my hon. Friend is now endeavouring to raise, and if he will make it more clear I will give the best answer I can.

MR. SEXTON : Will the Commission be empowered to consider not only whether the Commissioners have duly carried out the intentions of Parliament in principle and in practice, but also whether the Acts as passed by Parliament are sufficient ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I think it would be for the Committee itself to consider the terms of Reference. My own view is that the Committee would be more usefully employed if it were to confine itself to the extent to which the Commission, County Court Judges, and other persons have carried out the intention of Parliament as indicated in the Acts mentioned in the Order of Reference.

MR. SEXTON : Assuming the Acts to be imperfect, would it be beyond the power of the Committee to draw attention to imperfections in the Acts themselves ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I take it that, according to the terms of Reference, the inquiries of the Committee would bring out whatever defects might exist in the working of the Acts, and, as my hon.

Friend may remember, the last clause in the Order of Reference invites the Committee to make any suggestions as to any defects that may be brought to light in the course of their inquiry. I think that that covers the ground which my hon. Friend desires.

MR. KNOX : Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether the fact that 43,000 tenants have been, if not evicted, at any rate, deprived of the benefits of the Land Acts, is a matter worthy of the consideration of the Committee?

MR. J. MORLEY : That, of course, will be for the Committee to determine when they meet. The Order of Reference covers the whole of that ground, and I have no doubt that if it be found on inquiry that an extension of the terms of Reference was desirable, it would be done.

MR. CLANCY : Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to include or to draw attention to the decisions of the Land Courts in Ireland, by which, in the opinion of many, the intentions of Parliament have been defeated?

MR. J. MORLEY : Those decisions will be taken as the starting-points of inquiry if, in the judgment of the Committee, the principles upon which the decisions are based come within the scope of the inquiry.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) : How is the Committee to arrive at the intentions of Parliament except by the expressions used in the Acts?

MR. J. MORLEY : I do not really like to go any further. There is the Order of Reference, and the Committee will no doubt interpret it for themselves. If a discussion on the Order is desired then the House can see how far the Committee has gone.

LADO.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether troops belonging to the Congo Free State are at Lado; and if Lado is within the British sphere of influence?

SIR E. GREY : Lado is within the British sphere of influence, and we have no knowledge that any expedition from the Congo Free State is at Lado.

UNYORO.

COMMANDER BETHELL : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Colonel Colville is about to make war on Unyoro?

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL : At the same time, may I ask the hon. Baronet whether Kaba Rega, Chief of the Unyoro, is known to hold 50,000 Natives of the Waganda and other tribes in slavery; whether he has for months past harassed the British forces, and especially the Soudanese established to the westward of Uganda; and whether the Government have any definite news as to adequate measures having been taken to uphold our responsibilities and carry out our duties in the Unyoro district until such time as a final decision is come to on the Uganda question?

SIR E. GREY : There is no doubt that Kaba Rega holds many nations in slavery, but we cannot say exactly what number. Owing to his slave-raiding propensities, his determined hostility to Uganda, and his support of the Mahomedan faction there, it has from time to time been necessary to take measures against him. We hear by telegraph that information has been received at Zanzibar that Colonel Colville has recently found it necessary to take some such measures, but we have heard no details either as to what has been done or as to the special reason for it.

UMTASSA'S COUNTRY.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) : On behalf of the hon. Member for Mid Glamorganshire, I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is permissible under the law affecting British subjects in Umtassa's country for Magistrates in the service of the Chartered Company to force natives to labour for the Company, and to use their powers as Magistrates to establish this form of slavery; and, if not, what steps will be taken to prevent the continuance of this practice?

MR. S. BUXTON : It is not permissible for Magistrates in Umtassa's country to force natives to labour against their will. I have no information before me to show that any Magistrate has attempted to act contrary to the law in the matter.

Mr. J. Morley

THE ARREST OF MR. TAYLOR AT UMTALI.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received any particulars of the arrest in January last of Mr. H. J. Taylor, an Englishman resident at Umtali, and agent of a Company holding interests adverse to those of the Chartered Company ; whether he is aware that Mr. Fort, the Magistrate who tried the case, was also the prosecutor, and in the service of the Chartered Company ; is he aware that the offence alleged in the summons is stated to be that he encouraged the natives of Manica to believe that he is the Ron or big Chief, and thereby on the 6th January caused the Queen Chicanga to ignore the authority and message of the acting Resident Magistrate and refuse to send in native labour to him ; whether this is an offence against the law anywhere ; and who appointed Mr. Fort, and who can dismiss him ?

MR. S. BUXTON : According to the newspaper reports which I have seen of the affair referred to, the person arrested and charged was Mr. William Moncroft Taylor alias "Umtunga George," not Mr. H. J. Taylor. Mr. Fort, the Magistrate, was appointed and is removable by the High Commissioner. It does not appear from the Report whether he or the police acted as prosecutor. But in very primitive communities the duties are often combined. The charges as given in the newspaper report do not agree with the statement of them set out in the third paragraph of the question. The actual charges appear to have been (1) That he interfered with the administration of the Government. (2) That he incited the natives to resist the Government. (3) That he was a person dangerous to the peace of the district. Charge No. 2 is an offence in every country, and charges Nos. 1 and 3 are offences in many countries. As I have stated, in reply to the Member for West Cavan, the Secretary of State has called for a Report on the case.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND MARRIAGE LAWS.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Depart-

ment whether his attention has been called to a case in the South Western Police Court, reported in *The Daily News* of the 16th of March, of a poor woman who complained to Mr. de Rutzen that a clergyman refused to perform the ceremony of marriage between her daughter and her would-be husband because she was approaching her confinement, although the banns had been paid for ; whether a clergyman of the Church of England can lawfully refuse to perform the ceremony of marriage between two persons, not otherwise incapacitated, upon the sole ground alleged ; and whether, in view of the expense and delay involved in a prosecution for such refusal, he will consider whether a cheap and rapid remedy could be provided in such a case ?

MR. ASQUITH : I am not in a position to answer this question, as I have not succeeded in getting satisfactory explanations from the clergyman in question. I must ask my right hon. Friend, therefore, to further postpone it.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN : I will repeat it on Thursday the 29th instant.

PARLIAMENT AND THE NATIONAL FLAG.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he expects to have at his disposal during the coming financial year the sum of £25, stated by his predecessor to be the amount required to enable him to display the national flag upon the Victoria Tower during the Session of Parliament ; and whether, in case the sum of £25 can be provided for the purpose, he will cause the National Flag to be displayed upon the National Parliament House, in accordance with the practice of every country other than the United Kingdom ?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) : Arrangements will be made for hoisting the National Flag on the Victoria Tower.

JUSTICES' PROPERTY QUALIFICATIONS.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government intend to introduce at once a Bill to repeal the property qualification for

Justices in the English and Welsh counties as promised last Session?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): Yes, Sir; it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill on that subject.

THE EVICTED TENANTS BILL.

MR. SEXTON: Can the Chief Secretary inform the House the probable date of the introduction of the Evicted Tenants Bill?

MR. J. MORLEY: What I said yesterday, in answer to a question, was that I was not able to state the exact date at which I hoped to bring in an Evicted Tenants Bill; but by that answer I did not mean that the prospect of bringing in the Bill was adjourned *sine die*. What I meant to suggest, and what I now say, is that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has stated the business up to the 5th or 6th of April, and the Bill will probably be mentioned when my right hon. Friend next states the order of business; but the hon. Member may rest assured I am too well aware of the urgent importance of that Bill to allow it to fall back.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question [19th March], "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

THE NAVY—THE "VICTORIA" DISASTER.

*SIR E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.) said, that whilst he heartily agreed with the opinions expressed as to the imperative necessity of our Navy being maintained at a strength fully equal to that of any two of the greatest Naval Powers in the world—which necessitated, as they knew, the expenditure of a very large sum of money beyond the amount provided under the Naval Defence Act—he felt that in view of the observations he had made last year against the construction of the ships of the Navy and of the conduct of some of Her Majesty's ships recently he should not be

doing his duty if he were not to protest in the House against those plans being repeated in the vessels which would, probably, very soon be built as additions to the Navy. He did so with the greatest respect to the Constructive Department of the Navy. He did not attach blame to the present Board of Admiralty any more than to the previous Board, or the Boards previous to that, because he believed that in the Naval Constructor's Department it was imperatively necessary that there should be continuity, more or less, of design and method of construction in the dockyards. But it was also necessary that the Department should be kept as level as possible with all the modern, scientific, and practical improvements which had been so enormously developed in the Mercantile Marine within the past few years. He had not an opportunity before of expressing his views to the House, because he had not the honour of a seat until after the vessels built under the Naval Defence Act had been practically all arranged for and brought under contract. He, therefore, took the first opportunity afforded him immediately after that most lamentable disaster to the *Victoria*, and again, later, on the Estimates last year, to draw the attention of the House to many of these points. He should not to-day be taking up the time of the House had the present Board of Admiralty taken the slightest notice whatever of the important points to which he had drawn the attention of the House. Judging, as he had been able to do, by examination of the plans of the vessels recently placed under contract, or probably very soon to be placed under contract, it was because he had observed no improvements in the vessels that he felt compelled to place before the House very clearly indeed his reasons for dissenting from the Admiralty having anything like the class of battle-ships and cruisers which had been constructed within the past few years. That position, he admitted, was a very bold one indeed. He felt, perhaps, that he was standing in an isolated position, but he would remind the House that naval officers held various opinions on these points founded on their own experience. The engineers had their opinions, and the shipbuilders, if they were freely and openly to discuss and criticise from

Mr. A. C. Morton

time to time the plans of vessels which were about to be built for the Navy, would, he thought, express the opinion which he was about to give to the House. He felt it his duty on naval matters generally to take this bold front, and clearly to give his opinion to the House at this very critical time. In the first place, he must remind the House that in the last few years we had gone into the construction of a class of war vessels totally different to what was known in this country some years ago—namely, the *Monitor* class of ships, which we had borrowed from the war between the Northern and Southern States of America. We had followed the construction of the *Monitor* class, now called battleships, to such an extent that we had arrived at an enormous ship, costing pretty nearly £1,000,000. It was, therefore, to his mind, a most essential thing, when we were about to repeat the construction of these vessels, that we should be perfectly satisfied that they were upon a design, as to magnitude and proportions, which would ensure the best prospects of success in case of war. Whilst he unhesitatingly condemned the relative proportions of all the ironclads and all the cruisers we had built in this country during the last few years, at a cost of something like £30,000,000 or £40,000,000, he felt, at the same time, he was bound to give to the House some idea of what he should propose in their place. It was not for him to destroy without proposing to construct. Up to the present these battleships had been built in length five times that of their beam. There was a vessel in existence, only 12 years old, the *Inflexible*, which was actually not more than four and a quarter times her breadth in length. It was the question of length which he wished particularly to bring before the House. Most of the battleships were five, and most of the cruisers six, beams in length. Take the *Majestic* and sister ship just about to be constructed. They were 390 feet in length, by 75 in width and 45 in depth, with 12,000 horse-power, and 1,500 tons supposed capacity for coal. What he proposed in the case of a ship of that character was that she should be 60 feet longer, five feet narrower, and three feet shallower. She would then not only do with 1,500 less horse-

power, which was in itself an enormous saving, but would carry 500 tons more coal. That ship would then be 450 feet in length, 70 feet in breadth, and 42 feet in depth. She would be of 10,500 horse-power, and carry 2,000 tons of coal upon 18 inches less draught of water than the *Majestic* would require. He now came to the *Powerful* and her sister ship, the new cruisers contracted for. They were 500 feet in length, 70 feet in breadth, and 45 feet in depth, with 25,000 horse-power, and a coal-carrying capacity of 3,000 tons. He should propose that future ships for the same purpose should be 30 feet longer, two feet narrower, and two feet shallower, with 1,500 horse-power less, and to carry 500 tons more coal. They would then be 530 feet in length, 68 in breadth, and 43 in depth, with 23,500 horse-power, and to carry 3,500 tons. He had no hesitation whatever in saying that these ships would not only prove themselves much better sea-boats, but would have much steadier gun platforms, would carry much more coal, and draw much less water, qualities which it was desirable should be secured for their ships. In connection with the *Crocodile* and four more of the transport vessels, the question arose the previous night whether the transport service should be continued by the Government or through private tonnage. In regard to these vessels, he could readily see how much loss must fall upon this country in the working of these vessels, merely by looking at them. They were only 360 feet in length, whilst 49 feet in width, which was really only $7\frac{3}{4}$ times their beam in length. The vessels should certainly be 440 feet in length, which would have been but nine times their beam in length. All the great successful Ocean ships now were at least nine times their beam in length, and some of them over ten times. The commercial firms of this country knew perfectly well what was to their advantage and what they gained by length. It might be said that vessels of this great length would be unhandy. He held from experience in the manipulation of large ocean-going steamers with twin screws that that objection no longer lasted. If anyone cared to watch any of the large Atlantic steamers coming into the Mersey, and getting to their anchorage through a crowd of ships, he would regard it as perfectly extraordinary how

these immense vessels were handled. If naval officers were questioned on the subject he was sure they would say they would not like to try it. He therefore held that so far as the handling of the ship was concerned since the introduction of the twin screw the objection to the length had vanished. But, strange to say, he observed very little, if any, extension in the warships since the twin screw had been introduced. In fact, it was perfectly astonishing how slowly the Constructive Department of the Admiralty seemed to have kept pace with the Mercantile Marine in the last few years. This was all the more lamentable because the money expended in our warships was something terrific, and, more than that, from the light work they were called upon to do during peace, it was probable they would last so very long that we should be saddled with all their defects for many years until some conflict came which would clear a number of them out of existence. In the meantime, we were piling up enormous expenses on the first cost of ships, and then also rendering ourselves more liable to our enemies, or neighbours who might become enemies in the future, who would profit by our disasters. He had no hesitation in saying we had had three disasters within the last few months, which should certainly have made the Constructive Department of the Navy pause very much before they sought to repeat the plans of warships which had recently been repeated and which were being repeated to-day. Take the Atlantic liners, even the small ones, and he would ask, whoever heard of a small steamer coming back on account of the weather? He guaranteed that in the last 10 years no ocean steamer of half the tonnage of the *Resolution* had put back for such a reason. In the case of the *Resolution*, he did not blame the captain, but the vessel. It was very likely the captain used a very wise discretion in putting back under the circumstances, but he did hold that a ship of that enormous tonnage, and with enormous power on board, had no business whatever to put back under the circumstances. That was to say, if the material in that ship had been put in proper shape and proportions, if the intelligence had been brought to bear in designing that ship that was brought to bear on the smallest merchant ship, she

would have been designed on such lines that she would not have thought of coming back. There was the *Gleaner*, a little bit of a torpedo gunboat, which went and finished her voyage without turning a hair. The reason the *Gleaner* and other craft of that description were such marvellous sea boats was because when they were first devised as very necessary adjuncts to our Navy their designing was left very much to two or three private builders. The result was that these torpedo-boats were nine or ten times the beam in length—or, in other words, they were constructed after the fashion of the Ocean liners. In the early torpedo-boats the mistake was that their dimensions were so diminutive that for any practical use in handling them they would require men of a height of only four feet six, or, at most, five feet. The poor seamen told off to man these boats came back from a commission almost hunchbacked. In the recent torpedo-boats this had been changed, and they were made larger. His observations referred to battleships in the first instance, and then to the armoured cruisers. The smaller fry he did not wish to be very sceptical about, or to express any opinion upon. With regard to designs, shipbuilders were often asked about the building of warships, as if responsible. But the idea of the Government was that private builders had nothing to do with the designs of warships; no private builder was ever asked about the smallest thing in the ship, every iota was given to him in drawings and directions; he was not required to think, he was no longer the shipbuilder requiring to know the hundred and one things and to exercise the intelligence to the successful application of which the Mercantile Marine was a monument. He was reduced to, nothing better than a stonebreaker. He simply became a contractor, and was not required to exercise his own intelligence for fear lest there should not be the same uniformity and similarity of design in the character of the warships. Successive Admiralties had lost a great deal, indeed, by requiring so uniformly that their designs should be left uncriticised and their directions carried out to the letter. Many of the ships built by private shipbuilders for foreign Governments, he did not hesitate

to say, had marked improvements over those of our Government, particularly as to their relative proportions and dimensions, the reason being that the shipbuilders had some latitude given them, and were able to apply their own experience to the work. There was another point in connection with these ships. In the case of one like the *Resolution*, and so long as heavy guns formed part of modern warfare and there were heavy turrets, these had almost unavoidably to be placed near the end of the short ship, and at the same time, in order to get a perfectly absurd speed out of such vessels, they were made so fine at the ends that when with these big guns and turrets they had to face a head sea they were compelled to dive into it, for there was no length whatever by which they could be borne over the waves. The advantage also of a long ship was that it would give them a much steadier gun platform. They should endeavour to have their vessels as long as possible. Take the case of the *Royal Sovereign*, which had now been in commission for two years, and yet it was admitted she did not know what an Atlantic gale was. He called such a state of things monstrous. The first thing she ought to have been told off to do was to have made a voyage to New York or Halifax in the depth of winter the moment she was ready for sea, for the reason that she was the first of a number of vessels that were to be built, and her faults should have been ascertained as quickly as possible. He did not think the smallest owner in the Kingdom would have allowed a new ship, the fore-runner of a number of others, to be ranked as fit for her work until he had tried her thoroughly, whereas the *Royal Sovereign* had not yet seen anything like heavy weather. So far as seaworthiness was concerned, these vessels were wretched sea-boats compared with the Mercantile Marine, which was entirely due to their being absurdly short. In other words, while the Navy had been growing in length by inches the Mercantile Marine had been grown by feet. At the present time ships for the Mercantile Marine were in process of construction to be 160 feet longer than the cruisers which had just been laid down, yet be two feet narrower, showing what an extraordinary tendency there was in the Construc-

tive Department of the Navy to cling to the old-fashioned dimensions. With reference to the coaling capacity of the ships, could they conceive any more lamentable position than that of a battleship without a single mast or stitch of canvas, with empty bunkers and the enemy in sight? Either torpedo-boats would attack her by night or the enemy by day would fire upon her and send her to the bottom. A battleship was looked to in the matter of coal by all her torpedo-boats. Thus, if such boats and a gunvessel or two came alongside with bunkers empty and wanted a few tons of coal from an ironclad, and this operation were repeated a few times, the carrying capacity of the ironclad as at present designed and constructed would be soon exhausted. Again, supposing there was heavy weather and a collier came to supply the ironclad, he had not heard of any arrangement for getting the coal out of the collier. He fancied the collier would have to drop astern and wait for fine weather. But if the ironclad was obliged to lie there waiting for coal, she would in the meantime be at the mercy of the enemy. It was imperative not only that these vessels should have sufficient coal and to spare, but also that it should be placed in bunkers more accessible. The cruisers of the dimensions proposed were no doubt an improvement on the old cruisers, but they were of nothing like the proportion they should be, and although it was proposed to have a coal capacity of 3,000 tons they had an enormous draught of water. It simply meant that such a vessel could not possibly approach a great many of our harbours; she certainly could not get through the Suez Canal, and, further than that, it rendered the navigation of such vessels dangerous in the hands of pilots. When a local pilot had been in the habit of taking charge of the navigation of a vessel given a draught of 26 feet and was then given charge of one with a draught of 28 or 29 feet, as in the case of these cruisers, there was a tremendous risk of his putting such vessels upon the ground somewhere. He considered, therefore, that that was another drawback. If these new cruisers, the *Powerful* and *Terrible*, and also the *Majestic* and *Magnificent*, had been made longer they could have carried this extra amount of coal upon a much less draught of water, which was

a most important matter in connection with the Navy. Again, when we fought it would probably be from home. It was not likely that the enemy would attack the British Isles. We should be called upon to send armour-clad vessels and cruisers to different parts of the world; we should have to fight on the enemy's coast, and we could not expect to put into this and that port to coal, whilst, if a collier had followed our vessels to supply them, they would not be able to take it on board if the weather were rough. In every way, therefore, the fact of their building these vessels so short—requiring them to draw so much water—making them so broad, and thus requiring them to have so much more steam-power—these were all points in a wrong direction. Again, so far as stability was concerned, it was a curious fact that the longer the ship the more stable she was. He had known vessels which could hardly stand on their legs until they were lengthened, but which, after being lengthened, became very steady ships. With reference to the armaments, he was not competent to express an opinion as to what they should be, but, whatever weight of armour was used to protect the ships—be it guns or armour-plate—let them always be placed as much as possible in the centre of the ship, because, if placed towards the end of the ship, they were throwing weighty armour away, and protecting a part of the vessel which, if properly subdivided and arranged, would be able to sustain itself for all practical purposes. In the case of the warship *Lepanto*, recently built by the Italian Government, the four enormous guns were practically exactly amidship, and yet, from their arrangement, there appeared no difficulty whatever in these guns being brought to bear together, over either the stem or stern of the ship, or upon any other point of the compass. Now he came to the question of the *Camperdown*, and he thought if anything could illustrate a greater want of practical knowledge in construction, it was the steel snout that was put on this vessel without any suitable backing behind. The consequence was, that when she ran into a steel-sided ship—the unfortunate *Victoria*—she not only played havoc with that ship, but she so damaged herself that she became a

cripple, and gave great anxiety to the captain lest she should go down also. He held that it was preposterous to expect to arm a vessel in the bows like this so as to act upon an enemy. They had attempted to armour this ship with this snout in a way that was impracticable. They had scores of vessels armed with these rams in them, and he did not think that the Admiralty had ever tried them against any floating target, as they should have done. A few years ago there were more of them, but they had hardly a depôt where there were not a number of old warships—hulks, they were called—and he could not understand why, when these snouts were first made, they did not go full tilt into one of these old hulks. If they had done that they would have been able to have formed an idea from the results; they could then have ascertained whether the structure called a ram would have injured itself or not. In the case of a gun, if every time they pulled the trigger the barrel burst or the gun came to grief, it could not be called a weapon. They should have covered one of the old hulks with 18-inch armour, and then have gone full tilt at her, by which they would have discovered the effect upon the ram. Instead of that, they did not discover this until after the lamentable disaster with the *Victoria*. The *Camperdown* walked into the *Victoria* at only five or six knots an hour, and yet did herself sufficient harm to make it requisite for her to go into port to get repaired. What they wanted was a real ram warship with both ends alike, and so constructed that she could walk at 14 knots an hour through the best armour-clad target they could design for the purpose without doing more than knock the paint off her prow. Until a ram was fit for that she did not deserve the name. As a practical man, he saw no difficulty in producing such a ram, and he would guarantee that one ram of that kind would send to the bottom half-a-dozen battleships in case of a war. There was nothing to prevent such a ram being designed so that shot and shell should have no effect on her. If handled by some of our splendid old salts, by a commander of great coolness, energy, and determination, he was satisfied that one vessel of that kind—of perhaps two-thirds the size of the *Majestic*, or 10,000 tons, which had

not cost more in proportion—would tell a story in naval engagements that would perfectly astonish old naval officers. Generally, men were fond of the ship they had been accustomed to, and there were only a few of them who were disposed to take advantage of modern art and science and to bring it to bear in warfare. Undoubtedly, the next war would be an engineers' war more than a naval officers' war. Then with regard to the cruisers, they had no masts or sails, and were practically battleships, though it was true they were not armoured as battleships; but, so far as working the ship was concerned, it was really becoming an engineering question. As was stated by his hon. Friend below him, the Member for Kirkdale, the more serious work in the next war would have to be done under the deck in the various engine-rooms. So serious would be the duties which this branch of the Service would be called upon to execute that he felt the engineering department would have to be looked to much more carefully and closely than it had been up to the present time. He now came to the melancholy loss of the *Victoria*. Whenever they heard of one of these vessels being completed, she was described as being "minutely subdivided by bulkheads." Up to the present time this minute subdivision by bulkheads was simply a trap. There was no practical use in it, and he made that statement from the Minutes of Evidence taken upon the inquiry into the loss of the *Victoria*. Any one from that evidence, even an amateur in naval construction, would see how deficient she was in a proper subdivision by bulkheads, nearly all of which stopped at a deck with only a freeboard of 2ft. or 3ft. If by an ordinary accident any one or two of the compartments in the *Victoria* had become injured and flooded they would naturally think the vessel might sink only a foot or two and be out of trim to that extent, when the commander would run some water into the corresponding opposite compartments so that the vessel might be trimmed for the time. But here they had an instance where the prow of the *Camperdown* entered two or three compartments only. But these were joined to other compartments by watertight bulkhead doors, and these doors, it was lamentable to relate, were still left open at the time of the accident. Many

others would have been closed had there been a proper design for so doing, and what was still more lamentable was that years before the vessel was built the Admiralty were aware of a plan for closing bulkhead doors instantaneously. Though the Admiralty knew this they had never made use of the plan, yet other shipowners had never ceased to use it since it had been designed, for it was a plan never patented, and therefore open to everyone. When the accident occurred there was not time to close the doors, as the particular construction used required many minutes for the work, whereas by the process that ought to have been in use it would not have required as many seconds. A sad point, too, was that the Admiralty Minute on the loss of the *Victoria* seemed to be an attempt to gloss over the loss of that ship. He was sorry it was so, because it had the effect upon the Admiralty or the Naval Construction Department of causing them to continue to produce plans for shipbuilding with very little improvement on the *Victoria*. When anything of this sort happened it was their duty to take the full change out of the disaster. It was bad enough to lose by a disaster; but if they did not take any advantage of it, it made the loss tenfold. If they had not been able to get experience by a regular naval engagement, at least they should get all the information possible out of these terrible disasters when they occurred. He saw the gallant Admiral, Member for Eastbourne, was present, but he felt he must trespass on his special department. He wished now to refer to the matter of the manœuvre. He held that the manœuvre on the *Victoria* was one which ought not to have been attempted, and he would give his reasons for saying so. It was a manœuvre in which the vessels were directed to turn inwards to each other. He held that such a manœuvre ought to be struck off the Admiralty books and never allowed to be performed, especially when they might turn outwards, which would accomplish the same thing. These ships in line might have approached to within 100 yards, and then when the order came they should have turned outwards. In doing so there was no chance of running into any of their neighbours. Even if

any accident occurred to their steering gear, or the screw got disabled, they ran no risk in attempting to turn outwards; but in turning inwards they ran very great risk if their steering gear got out of order, or one of the engines broke down, in which case they could not have the benefit of the twin screws for manœuvring the ship. By turning inwards they gained nothing, and ran the terrible risk which resulted in this accident that proved so fatal. He might be told it was all very well to speak after the event; but what he wanted to point out was that they ought to take advantage of it after it had occurred; and when they saw that a manœuvre of the kind was attended with risk, while the other manœuvre was not attended with any risk, surely it was unwise to attempt a manœuvre that they knew had been so disastrous. In view of all these points, on which he had ventured, quite at too great a length, to detain the House, he felt that when they were on the threshold of spending at least £10,000,000 upon further ships, the House should insist, before granting such an enormous sum of money, upon the necessity or desirability of the matter being referred, if the House thought proper, to a small Committee of this House, or to a Committee of the Admiralty, on which he thought the engineering element should form a part, and upon which he also thought some of the shipbuilders of the Mercantile Marine should form a part. In this way the experience of the Admiralty and that of the builders of the Mercantile Marine would be brought together, and they might obtain, what he held they had not yet got, much more perfect warships.

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff) said, that in taking note of the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down he was sorry to say he should have to open up a very wide field of difference between them, for, certainly, if the hon. Member's speech had brought to their notice some points of considerable importance, undoubtedly it had opened up some of the oddest ideas he had ever heard in connection with naval construction. For instance, in his disquisition the hon. Member told the House that the proper thing to have done the first time a ram bow was constructed was to run it full tilt into a hulk armoured with

18 inches of armour to receive it. If his hon. Friend would forgive him, he would say no Admiralty could ever have entered on a more foolish or futile experiment than that would have been, and for the obvious reason that the difficulties that occur and the accidents and dangers that occurred to ships when ramming each other invariably arose from the fact that the ship rammed was in motion; consequently any attempt to prove the value of the ram by running it square into the bottom of a moveless object would be quite futile. He remembered very well watching and examining in Portsmouth Harbour the effect of the ramming of one German ironclad by another. It would be remembered by hon. Members that the *König Wilhelm* was sunk by the *Grosser Kurfürst* off Folkestone. Now, what happened in that case? The whole effect on the *König Wilhelm* arose from the fact that the projecting ram was being carried forward by the onward motion of the ship struck, and thus formed a lever, which, acting above the struck part of the vessel, tore the whole of the stern out of its holdings.

SIR E. HARLAND said, the ram which he depicted was one which would stand going full tilt into another vessel if that vessel were going 15 knots an hour. He held it could be constructed to go at any angle into another ship, but no man would seek to attack at an angle if he could get square on, and that was one of the things which would show the cleverness of the commander.

SIR E. J. REED said, he did not know what ram the hon. Member had depicted. What he called attention to was this: the difficulty of making a ram bow capable of doing what the hon. Member's ram bow could do was that the bow had to be formed at the very entrance to the vessel, an entrance that was very fine, and being very fine was very well taken hold of by a passing ship. However, far be it from him to suggest his hon. Friend could not do what he said. If the hon. Member produced a ram bow that was not capable of being destroyed, capable only of having the paint scraped off by collision with a battleship, he hoped he would not think the Admiralty were so backward in regard to improvements that they would not, without the least hesita-

tion, accept a ram bow of such a type. But if he might venture to say so—and his hon. Friend would excuse him for being as frank as he had been in this Debate—he would say there was a most extraordinary fundamental fault in the whole speech and argument of his hon. Friend. One phase of that fault was to be found in the fact that in the early part of his speech the hon. Member described the battleship and the cruiser and argued as if there were no difference between the two, and he made a note at the moment intending to express his surprise that an hon. Gentleman, an expert ship-builder of great reputation and of known and undoubted knowledge, should not have seen at once the fundamental difference that existed between a battleship and a cruiser. Notwithstanding that, his hon. Friend in speaking of cruisers said they were in fact battleships. But they differed in this respect—that the cruiser had nothing, as cruisers were built—he was not a great admirer of them himself—but as they were built they had nothing but a cover for the engines, and so forth. Now, his hon. Friend ought to know, as a naval designer, that when they were dealing with deck protection they were at perfect liberty to make the length and breadth what they pleased, because, as any Member of the House could see, when they had a given depth of ships and wanted to protect a certain amount of displacement from vertical attack it did not matter whether they made it broad and short or long and narrow; the deck area was precisely the same if they protected the same measure of displacement with the same deck area of iron. That being so with the cruiser, what was the state of things with the battleship? His hon. Friend talked as if they could go and make a battleship 500 feet long and comparatively narrow just as they could do with a cruiser. His hon. Friend knew, as a naval constructor, the value of length in a passenger ship; but when they came to a battleship, when they were going to put 18 inches of armour on the side several feet above water and several feet below the water, was it then of no consequence what the length of the ship was? [An hon. MEMBER: No.] No; then he could only say he had very little respect for the opinion of his hon. Friend, and he required no further proof that the hon.

Member had never designed a ship with 18-inch armour.

SIR E. HARLAND said, his hon. Friend was contemplating that armour would be carried to the end of the 500 feet, but the plan was not adopted.

SIR E. J. REED said, if the hon. Member would excuse him, he was not supposing anything of the kind; what he did suppose was, that they did not carry their armour approximately to the end of the ship; they had to complete the armour protection by seeing that they did not necessarily give any great amount of weight. His hon. Friend had declared himself an opponent of armoured protection at the ends of ships. He agreed with that to some extent. Personally, he had never advocated as a necessity the armouring of the fine wedge ends of Her Majesty's ships, and it would be unwise to put armoured protection where there was no displacement to protect; but if the hon. Gentleman made a fine-ended ship, and intended to produce the very powerful ram of which he had spoken, he would, in the place of the armour which he took away, have to put something else of a very weighty character.

SIR E. HARLAND: I quite agree.

SIR E. J. REED said, the point on which he differed absolutely from his hon. Friend was where he thought that the remedy, in such a case as that of the *Victoria*, would be the adoption of automatic water-tight doors.

SIR E. HARLAND: I did not mention automatic doors. I did not mean them to be automatic.

SIR E. J. REED said, he thought his hon. Friend wanted doors that would close instantly, and so be on an automatic arrangement. But there was a very important question involved in this. While his friends at the Admiralty were willing to tell the best story they could in regard to the *Victoria*, they took good care not to repeat the features of the *Victoria* in the new battleships which they were building. What they did now was to carry the armour so far forward towards the bow that they left unarmoured only as much of the ship as they could leave unarmoured with safety, and if an accident were to occur to one of the new battleships like that which happened to the *Victoria* the injury would, therefore,

be much more limited in extent. On the question of water-tight doors, he wished to say that if they left unarmoured only so much of the ends of the ship as they did not want to use of the line of the work, they might have as perfect a system of water-tight doors as they pleased, and have them worked automatically, because what they wanted when an accident happened was to be able to shut off that portion of the ship in which the accident took place from the working part of the ship. But in the case of the *Victoria* and of all ships of that type, which he had never ceased to condemn, the unarmoured part of the vessel was the part in which the men lived, and in which the magazine, torpedo rooms, store rooms, and other compartments were placed, and to which the crew must have access during battle. If the Admiralty had sent out a Minute instructing the men in Her Majesty's ships to close the water-tight doors as soon as an accident happened, and so shut up their fellows in compartments from which there was no escape, he hoped the men would never carry out such an order, because it was against human nature that it should be enforced. In passenger ships, some of the finest and most successful of which had been designed by the hon. Member for North Belfast, there were transverse bulkheads, and the water-tight doors could be shut as rapidly as possible, because they only prevented access from one compartment to another, and did not prevent access from the compartments to the deck above. But when, as in the case of the *Victoria*, these was no access to the deck from the compartments when the water-tight doors were closed, it was cruel and inhuman to shut up the men in such death-traps and leave them to their fate. It was an utterly impossible state of things. His hon. Friend had confounded the cruiser with the battleship, and saw no necessity why they should be of very different proportions.

SIR E. HARLAND: I meant that there was no external difference between them; that if two ships were a mile apart no one could tell whether one was armed and the other unarmed.

SIR E. J. REED said, he had not the slightest idea that his hon. Friend had been speaking of external appearances, and not construction. They were deal-

ing with structures which had to be packed with guns, arms, and torpedoes, and all the experience of his hon. Friend was absolutely at fault if he supposed that anything was gained in steam power by making a heavily-armoured battleship excessively long. From his own experience in naval construction he could mention a ship 300 feet long built by him, which accomplished the same results as one 400 feet long, the armour, armament, engine, and boiler power being the same in each case, while the cost of the former was £100,000 less than that of the latter. They would find that a short ship would go as fast as a long one, and save £100,000 in the building of it. The Member for Lewisham, who sat opposite, was the son of the man who participated in the experimental inquiry which brought about that brilliant success. The displacement was not the same in the case of those two ships; but what was the advantage of making the displacement the same when they had the same capacity for offence and defence and the same coal capacity? He was willing to admit that in steaming at sea they certainly got an enormous advantage from the greater length, and he was not sure whether in these days the naval mind would not be brought to the acceptance of much greater lengths in Her Majesty's ships than we yet saw. He thought his hon. Friend, before addressing the House, ought to have placed upon paper his long and narrow battleship, armed and armoured as were Her Majesty's new battleships. He would be very much surprised if the hon. Gentleman attempted to produce such a ship, though, indeed, he ought to be careful in making that statement, for his hon. Friend never put forward anything that was not successful. He feared, however, that a vessel of that kind, armed and armoured as a battleship, would roll not as the *Resolution* rolled, but roll bottom upwards, and do that very quickly. What was the net outcome of his hon. Friend's advocacy of great length and small breadth? Let them consider what sort our warships were. For half its length the ship was filled up with steam boilers, and magazines containing powder, torpedoes, dynamite—in fact, the ship was one mass of explosives from stem to stern, and utterly unlike the boats, in construction

and purpose, which his hon. Friend the Member for North Belfast built with so much merit and success. Their object should be to keep the explosive things on board battleships as far away from the enemy as they could have them. Under the scheme of his hon. Friend these explosives would be near to the enemy. If they had ships broad in the middle they could keep the boilers and magazines in the centre, at a considerable distance from the enemy's attack, whether by torpedo or ram. But if they had narrow ships built, and gave them the small breadth of which his hon. Friend was so fascinated, the enemy could destroy them with greater readiness.

SIR E. HARLAND: I said I would give them 70 feet.

SIR E. J. REED said, he had been recently asked by a naval authority what he thought of the existing warships in this respect, and whether he thought them fairly safe from the enemy. He had been obliged to answer in the negative. What he would like to see done was the building of battleships which would be less of a ship and more of a fortress—ships with centre accommodation for extensive war material, and with less steaming qualities than heretofore. He ventured to say that the circumstance which had prevented the construction of such battleships was the dock accommodation. But he asked the Admiralty to consider whether the time was not passed for the making of battleships simply to conform to these holes in the ground, when there were such capabilities in the construction of floating docks to receive ships of any depth of water. He apprehended that if everyone present were to make objection to the ships about to be constructed they would do so without doubt. But he would commend to the consideration of the Admiralty, with regard to the future development of the Navy, whether it would not be well to make our ships 100 feet broad, or 120 feet if they liked, if by making them so we could keep the enemy away from the vital portion of the ship and give ourselves the chance of winning a great battle? He hoped he would not be told by the hon. Member for Gateshead, who, no doubt, would follow him, that he was all for breadth and all against length in the construction of these ships. No ;

he was in favour of adapting our means to our ends, and he said that with regard to warships and battleships the first end was to keep the ship free from the fire of the enemy. He should like his right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty to give them an assurance that the ships about to be built would be built on lines that would make them invulnerable to guns, rams, or torpedoes. One thing he was certain of, and that was that they would never get such an assurance with respect to any vessel whatever if they followed the lines suggested by his hon. Friend the Member for North Belfast. With regard to the *Resolution*, he had been asked the other day what he thought of her ; and while he admitted there had been reason for a good deal of anxiety, he said there was no danger to the ship. He believed there still existed a very considerable amount of anxiety, not as to the danger of vessels capsizing, but as to their efficiency at sea, and it would be well to have it set at rest as soon as possible. He thought it unfair of his hon. Friend the Member for North Belfast—he meant from an argumentative point of view—to point out that while the *Gleaner* went well in a storm the *Resolution* rolled heavily. Why, a little boat would go well on waves that "rolled" a large ship! They might have two ships, one of which rolled violently and the other went smoothly over the same waves one day, and yet the one that went well to-day might roll to-morrow, and *vice versâ*. To his mind, the fact that a small vessel did not roll while a large vessel rolled violently did not mean censure for the large vessel or praise for the small one. In the Report of the Admiralty there was a case in point. An Admiral of the Channel Squadron had his squadron off the West of Ireland, and one of the ships was ordinarily a very heavy roller. She was one of his (Sir E. J. Reed's) ships, but was built for a pacific purpose and with a light draught of water. But on the West Coast of Ireland, where the Atlantic waves rolled in, the usually rolling ship was perfectly steady, while the ordinary steady ship rolled with as much violence that if it did not alarm the Admiral, it highly astonished him, and he wrote a Report to the Admiralty, as if a miracle had occurred. His hon. Friend the Member for North Belfast had said that when

a ship was lengthened her stability increased. But where was a ship usually lengthened? In the middle part. The stability of a ship was derived from her middle part. The ends were unstable; the middle supplied the stability which kept the ends up; and if they cut a ship in two and added a considerable length to her stable part, they, of course, made her more stable. That was so obvious that he must express his surprise that his hon. Friend should bring it forward as an argument in supporting his contention.

SIR E. HARLAND: Will the hon. Gentleman allow me to say—

SIR E. J. REED said, that when his hon. Friend was in the House as long as he was he would not be so anxious to keep himself right on all points. He intended to put his hon. Friend wrong on all points, but he would do it with the greatest friendship, and with an admiration for his hon. Friend's success as a shipbuilder. His hon. Friend made a singular mistake in lightly treating the necessity for uniformity in the building of ships. For his part, he had a complaint treasured up against the Admiralty for unnecessarily departing, as he thought, from uniformity. He thought that when they built a number of ships of similar sizes and of a similar type, it was of the greatest moment that those ships should be uniform in their internal arrangements. If it were otherwise the men would be all at fault. They would have to learn every new ship, though, to all intents and purposes, it was of the same type and character as the others. He was quite certain that any departure from uniformity would tell against us in many ways. He remembered a discussion which took place at the Board of Admiralty as to the dimensions of shells. One naval officer, a very experienced man, said—"Do not let us have 10-inch and 11-inch shells, because in the haste of battle the men will mistake one for the other, and the use of the guns will be lost. Make the difference palpable. Have a 12-inch shell; but do not have shells so nearly alike, and yet so different in sizes." His hon. Friend the Member for North Belfast had said that if the Admiralty designed a ship and sent it out to be built by a contractor they should be satisfied if the general plan were fol-

lowed, and let the contractor have scope. The hon. Member for North Belfast was not the first private shipbuilder that came to the House of Commons and told the Government that in that respect they were wrong. The late Mr. John Laird, of Birkenhead, for many years took the same line. But while he had been engaged at the Admiralty he saw too much of the departures from the original design by contractors to favour such a policy. He remembered on one occasion, when a certain number of ships were to be built, he said that it was a good time to try the result of putting them up for competition amongst the contractors. But not one of the contractors followed out the design, and the Government had to have the design followed afterwards. He therefore thought the Admiralty was right in giving out a design and insisting on its being carried out. He apologised to the House for the length of time with which he had occupied them, and thanked them for the kind hearing they had given him.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) said, that he had listened with great interest to the remarks of the hon. Member for North Belfast and also to those of the hon. Member who had just sat down with regard to the construction of men-of-war. No doubt the opinion of the hon. Member for Belfast as to the designing of first-class merchant vessels stood high, but he (Mr. Allan) must take exception to a great deal that the hon. Member had said when trying to show a similarity between merchant vessels and men-of-war. The hon. Member had overlooked the fact that a ship of war was practically a compromise. It would be impossible to convert a man-of-war into a merchant vessel, or a merchant vessel into a man-of-war. In looking at a man-of-war it was necessary to take into consideration her defensive as well as her offensive elements, which made her altogether different from a merchant steamer. When they came to take into consideration those two elements alone, leaving out the machinery and coal capacity, they were brought face to face with a state of things totally different to those which applied to a merchant steamer. Merchant ships were built low and narrow. An Atlantic liner was so constructed that she would attain a maximum of speed which could not be attained by a man-of-war. It was a mere waste of time,

Sir E. J. Reed

therefore, to endeavour to draw comparisons between the Atlantic liner and the man-of-war. However, there was one point in the hon. Member's speech which he had heard with a great deal of pleasure, and that was that the future naval wars in which this country might have to engage would be engineers' wars. No doubt that would impress itself on the House as it impressed itself on him (Mr. Allan). For his part, he was perfectly willing to leave the subject of the construction of men-of-war to the Director of Naval Construction and naval experts, who were fully capable of designing such vessels. He should object to hampering them by the appointment of a Committee of so-called experts. A looker-on might feel himself perfectly capable of giving instructions, but when set to do the job himself—say, for instance, to design a battleship—his ability fell very far short of his own estimate of himself. But he (Mr. Allan) entirely agreed with the hon. Member for North Belfast that we ought to ensure that our men-of-war had an adequate complement of engineers. A man-of-war ship nowadays was neither more nor less than a factory. It was a factory of destruction. The men who worked it were the engineers. They it was who had to give it its true value, and the best results would be obtained from that ship which had the best men and the best machinery in the engineers' department. He feared that the disposition was to look too much to ships and too little to men, and to fail to realise the great responsibility which rested on the engineering staff. They had their captains who were responsible for the ship's steering, and fighting, and going from port to port. They had their surgeons who were responsible for the health of the ship. They had their paymasters who were responsible for the cash book and the storehouse. But the engineers, what were they responsible for? The House would be startled to hear what the engineers had to do on board a twin-screw cruiser of 20,000-horse power under forced draught. In such a vessel there were 85 auxiliary steam engines, three auxiliary steamboats, 24 Whitehead torpedoes, two submerged torpedo tubes, five torpedo tubes above water, 164 water-tight doors, 30 water-tight hatches, 98 water-tight manholes, 207 sluices and drain valves, 21 venti-

lating valves, four Downton pumps, 23 flooding valves for magazines, 32 flooding valves for compartments. And over and above all this the engineers were responsible for all the engine fittings—for the breech mechanism and other details in connection with the armaments of the vessel. To look after these things there was only one staff or chief engineer, five engineers and assistant engineers, three chief engine-room artificers, and nine engine-room artificers. He asked as an engineer, Were these enough men to look after the machinery? He said “no.” The engine-rooms were undermanned. Compare them with the men in the engine-room of one of the Atlantic liners of 15,000-horse power. There they had one chief engineer, one senior second, two junior second, one senior third, five junior third, one senior fourth, five junior fourth, three fifth engineers, three electricians, two hydraulic engineers, and two refrigerating engineers, or a total of 26 on the engineering staff.

COMMANDER BETHELL: How many in each watch?

MR. W. ALLAN: Eight. He had not mentioned stokers at all. On a man-of-war ship of 20,000-horse power there were only 20 engineers as compared with 26 on an Atlantic liner of 15,000-horse power. What he wished to do without going more into detail as to the management of the engine-rooms—which he could do, if necessary, to the strengthening of his case—was to impress upon the Admiralty the fact that they were overlooking entirely the one great element of the safety and usefulness of these ships. The hon. Member for North Belfast had mentioned incidentally the rolling of the *Resolution*. Well, he never liked to look upon the rolling of ships in any other light than as the general consequence of a ship being at sea. It was impossible that a ship could go to sea without rolling or taking in water. He had never in the whole of his experience found it possible to avoid these things; therefore he would not in any shape or form condemn the officers of the *Resolution* or condemn the ship. It required no effort of genius to condemn a thing, and he did not mean to do it. He wished to show the House the condition of the engineers' department on the *Resolution*,

and to do that he would read a portion of a letter which he had received from a man in the engine-room. He wrote—

"The crank-pits were full of water. Five feet of water were in the bilges. We thought the sea suck-pipe flanges had drawn through working and vibration of engines. We had a very anxious time. The sea was six inches deep over the stoke-hole plates and came down the ash-hoist tubes, clearing the men out of the stoke-hole. The forward compartment was flooded. All the pumps were kept going to try to rid the ship of water. The ship was rolling heavily. Everybody was on their hands and knees in the engine-rooms. The sea coming in the forward barbettes the barrette screens were unshipped and washed overboard. We were hanging on to the regulation valves in the engine-room for nearly 48 hours, endeavouring to stop the racing of the engines. The seas were coming down into the engine-room over the upper deck combings to the ventilating trunks, which are four feet high above the deck. We were all batten down except one hatch between the funnel casings, and all most uncomfortable in the engine-room, with the cranks rising in the water; in fact, a water wheel was nothing to it."

He wished to impress upon the House that the construction of ships was not the chief matter for consideration. Ships could be built easily enough, but they could not build men. Why was it that they did not get engineers for the Navy? Why was it that there had been no response to the advertisements of the Admiralty for assistant engineers? Why was it that in five years in response to advertisements they had only got nine engineers? The reason why more men would not serve in the Navy as engineers was that those so serving were not treated and paid well enough. The anomalies in the Service, so far as these matters were concerned, were absurd and sufficient to make anyone responsible for the Navy blush. He had always considered that a man's pay ought to be in proportion to the responsibilities of his position, but, unfortunately, that was not a rule prevailing in the Navy. A naval chaplain was paid £260 a year, whilst an assistant engineer, who was largely responsible for the safety of the ship, only received the miserable pittance of £130, and out of that had to buy his clothes and pay part of his mess expenses. The Fleet surgeon received £540 a year, and the Fleet engineer only £390; the staff surgeon £240, and the staff engineer £200. A surgeon, no doubt, was useful to take a bolt out of a man's leg; but what could he do if a steam pipe burst, or a shot went through the

chimneys? This anomaly was ridiculous. It was not honest. Then the assistant paymaster—a mere clerk—received £170, and the assistant engineer £130. Shame on the Department that was responsible! No wonder engineers could not be induced to join the Navy. Had he to choose himself he would rather break stones than serve as an assistant-engineer, or stand at a lathe for 30s. a week. The engine-room artificers were paid only £9 10s. per month—less than a third engineer on board a steam collier. They had, moreover, no position and no prospects, notwithstanding the importance of their work. He felt very strongly on this matter, which was not one of political Parties at all. They could only look at the Navy from the lofty point of view of national salvation and strength, and he appealed to the Secretary to the Admiralty to take the matter up in that spirit, and sweep away all existing anomalies. Let engineers and artificers be given adequate pay, and let the accommodation provided for them be improved. Lengthen the ships another 10 feet, and give them proper housing—give them comfortable berths and a comfortable mess-room, and space for a bath when they came out of the dirty engine-room. Let them do something to encourage young men to enter the Service. He had 50 or 60 apprentices at his engineering works, and recently he had gone up to a dozen of them just out of their time and had urged them to enter the Government Service, but they had every one declined. Encouragement should be given to such men. The importance of treating naval engineers justly could not be exaggerated. Upon them, and them alone, did the safety of the British Fleet depend.

Mr. PENN (Lewisham) said, he noticed with great satisfaction from the published statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty that there was to be an increase in the number of engine-room artificers. That was a valuable concession, but he regretted to see that the skilled labourer was not increased in proportion to the unskilled labourer, although the amount of responsibility cast upon the former was increasing every year. The horse power in the Navy had increased from 500,000 in 1882 to 1,500,000. In other words, the men who formerly had charge of 700 horse-power

were now entrusted with 2,000 horse-power, the increase in the number of engineers not being at all adequate to the additional work which was imposed upon them. That was a point deserving of great consideration, because not only was the ordinary power over which the men were put in charge more difficult to manage, but there were now a quantity of machines to look after which did not exist a few years ago. The increase in the number of engineers for the current year was only 35. The increase in the torpedo destroyers would more than absorb that increased number of men. Not only was the Fleet increasing numerically, but there was a large increase going on in the power of ships. Take an old vessel such as the *Warrior*. That was of 9,000 tons and 4,000 horse-power. Well, the present torpedo-boat destroyer was of similar horse-power. It was clear, therefore, that the strain and work thrown on these engineer officers was largely increased. He was told that in the event of an emergency there were sufficient men in the Reserve. He had searched the Navy Estimates through, and could not quite see how that could be the case. They were, he thought, face to face with the difficulty of having an insufficient number of engineers for the requirements of the Navy. There were 370 on the Active List and 217 in the Reserve, but that 217 were absolutely engaged in keeping many of the ships in the First Reserve in a state of preparation for war, and they could not be removed. There were a few engineers in tenders and on other duties who in the event of war could be used, and there were certain other officers who could be put on active service; but in some of those cases the removal of the officers would cause very considerable dislocation. There was another source—but in the event of an emergency he did not think the Admiralty would be able to put its hand at once on the 181 officers of the force or any large proportion of them, because they would be at sea—and it was a very proper precaution on the part of the Admiralty that these men should be experienced in the management of quick-running steamers. There were those who said that quick-running steamers should be used as armed cruisers in time of war, but they would be the very ships that the Shipping Companies

would be inclined to keep at sea. That there was an insufficiency of engineer officers was shown by the fact that optional retirement at 50 years of age was entirely suspended at the present moment. No engineer officer would hesitate to place his services at the disposal of the Government in the event of war or great emergency. But it was a very different thing when those officers had their retirements taken away; they were losers in every possible way. An engineer officer, if paid properly for his services, was entitled to £400 a year on retiring. If he was kept on against his wish he received £401 10s. a year, and was therefore serving another five years for £110s. The £400 was very fairly looked upon as deferred pay. Not only was he placed in that position, but at 55 he was not as likely to obtain employment as at 50. He was also liable to the risks of war during the five years, and his commuted pension was reduced. It was wrong to keep those men serving against their will unless some pecuniary advantage was given them; and if the Admiralty would revise their rates of pay, both present and retiring, they would have the advantage of keeping in the Service the best men and allowing to retire those they did not care to keep. He was pleased to hear that the engineers' accommodation had been increased. There were only two sources from which engineer officers entered—one from outside and the other from Keyham College. From 1889 to the present they had heard that an infinitesimal number of engineer officers had been added to the Navy from outside sources, which could not, therefore, be relied upon as of any value. As to Keyham College, they were faced by the difficulty that only 30 engineer officers had been obtained from it, which only met the absolute waste of the Service. If ships and machinery were increased somehow or other the entries from the outside must be increased also. Five years ought to be required to make an engineer officer, and it used to take six, whereas now a large number were passed out after four years. He sincerely hoped the standard would not be lowered on account of this scarcity, but that rather superior inducements would be held out in order that the best men might be attracted into the Service.

The number necessary for care and maintenance was practically reduced to one half of what it ought to be; the Regulations gave a certain proportion, but only half that proportion was at present available. Then came the substitution in the engine-room for complements for ships of the Navy of unskilled labour. He had always urged that this was a step entirely in the wrong direction. However excellent a stoker might be he could not effect repairs to the machinery by reason of not having served his time to the trade. Stoker-mechanics were only the old stokers under another name, and not mechanics at all in the proper sense.

MR. FORWOOD: They pass a mechanical examination.

MR. PENN said, as a matter of fact, those men had all been represented as mechanics, but in point of fact they were not mechanics at all. No doubt they picked up in the course of their work a certain amount of engineering knowledge and skill; but that did not qualify them for the position of engineer or engine-room artificer. The hon. Member for Gateshead had stated the grievances of these officers; and though he was not their mouthpiece, he thought greater consideration should be shown to them. They could not bring political pressure to bear in the matter of votes, and their case had been to a considerable extent neglected. If he could only induce the Admiralty to bring pressure to bear upon the Treasury to improve their position so that our Fleet should not continue undermanned in regard to the skilled men required in the engine-room of our warships, and so that those men who should be attracted into the Service should be induced to enter it, great advantage to the Service would result.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, during the Debate nobody had entered a protest against the increased expenditure proposed by the Government upon naval armaments, although that increased expenditure was objected to by a large section of the people of this country. In the Naval Debate at the end of last Session the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) said the demand then being pressed on the attention of the House by the Opposition was due to outside pressure. At the time he (Mr. Cremer) ventured

to challenge that statement, and was rebuked for daring to do so. In view of that assertion the organisation with which he was connected decided to test the opinions of representative working men upon the subject, not men gathered from the hedge-sides, but officers of various organisations in different parts of the Kingdom.* The result of that experiment (which had been sent to the Members of the House) proved that on the part of intelligent working men, occupying responsible positions among the organised workers of the United Kingdom, there was a strong opposition to this proposed increase of expenditure of £3,000,000 upon the Navy. Four hundred and seventy signed the protest against the proposal, while 13 declined to do so, and said they were favourable to increased expenditure because it would give increased employment and be, as they believed, beneficial to the working classes. If he were to read the replies of those 13 individuals the House would see what intelligent specimens of working men they were, and he willingly handed them over to the right hon. Member for Birmingham and the Opposition as evidence of the public opinion they relied upon for proof of outside pressure. He had been told that such an expression of opinion as he had quoted was not of much value or importance. But what evidence had been produced that the country desired this increased naval expenditure or that it was needed? He had carefully watched the mode in which this scare had been manufactured. It began some months ago with articles in certain reviews. The cry was then taken up by Party organs; newspapers began to write about it; and one solitary meeting was held at the Guildhall in support of the proposal. Beyond that one meeting there had not been any expression of opinion from any part of the country in favour of the proposal now before the House. Not a single Petition had been presented to the House in favour of it. [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] If he was wrong he was open to correction; if any evidence existed from outside, either in the shape of meetings or Petitions to the House, that there was any belief in the necessity for building more ships or increasing the expenditure on the Navy, let it be produced. He was not aware of any, although he had

carefully noted the list of Petitions on various questions. Did those who were promoting this scare expect that rational people would accept their statements as evidence of public opinion upon the subject? The trap had been very skilfully baited, and as a supporter of the Government he sincerely regretted that they had fallen into it. What would probably happen at the next General Election? Members of the Opposition would go up and down the country and point to the swollen Budget of the Liberal Government as evidence of shameful waste and extravagance. [Mr. Forwood: No, no.] Well, judging by what they had done in the past, he concluded that was what they would do in the future, and the Government should have prevented them from having the opportunity. On the one hand, they (the Opposition) pressed for this increased expenditure upon ironclads, pointing to some imaginary danger in some part of the world; while, on the other hand, if the Government had not consented to increased expenditure, Opposition Members would have gone to the country denouncing them as unpatriotic. They were, in fact, between the devil and the deep sea. He again regretted that the Government had fallen into this cunningly-baited trap, and that they had not chosen the lesser evil of the two, and risked being denounced as unpatriotic. Four years ago, when the same question was before the House, and the then Government proposed to increase our Naval Expenditure by £21,000,000, he ventured to move an Amendment, and asked a question which was not then answered. That question he would now repeat—Where was the foe? Who was it that was so anxious to invade our shores? The number of our countrymen who were not in the state of continual alarm in which Members of the House who belonged to the Services seemed to live was growing. Would the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir R. Temple), who kept continually laughing at his (Mr. Cremer's) statements, be kind enough to tell the House which nation wanted to come and invade our shores, for he apparently possessed some exclusive information on the subject not available to people who took a rational and not an alarmist view of the situation. The only answer vouchsafed to him four years ago was that General

Boulanger occupied a very important position in France, and that somebody somewhere believed that unless we were very careful this country would be invaded by a French force headed by General Boulanger. He had the temerity on that occasion to ridicule the idea that any danger existed from that quarter, and to predict that the French people would soon sweep away that Pretender. Well, General Boulanger had disappeared, and no danger was likely to arise from our French neighbours. He protested at the time against the increased expenditure of £21,000,000 because the foolish example thus set would be sure to be imitated by other nations, and then in the course of a few years we should be again asked to vote additional supplies for the Navy on the ground that other nations had followed suit and had made their Navies as strong as ours. That prophecy had been fulfilled even sooner than had been anticipated, and to-day it was urged that because France had done whatever rational man must have known she would do, and, following our example, had built more ships, assigning as her reason for doing so that Great Britain had set the example, and they must do as other nations were doing—because France, Russia, Germany, and Italy had imitated our foolish and wicked example, now, forsooth, the House was asked to again increase the Vote by £3,000,000, and start again in this mad race of naval expenditure. He was sorry he was precluded from dividing the House on this occasion, because if only half-a-dozen Members had gone with him into the Lobby he would have protested by a Division against the proposal. An increase of the Navy would not be a permanent cure for the evil or danger, supposing it to exist, but an aggravation of the disease, because the bad example would be sure to be followed by other Naval Powers—unless they became bankrupt before they could do so; and in four or five years, or even less, another addition to the Naval Expenditure of the country would be demanded on the ground that the other Naval Powers had increased their Navies, and that we must still lead in this mad rivalry of armaments. His proposal was that Her Majesty's Government should take the initiative in inviting other Powers to confer upon the advisability,

not of increasing, but of reducing, their armaments. He did not know why the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir R. Temple) should be continually laughing at that suggestion. It proved that when gentlemen on the opposite side of the House professed to deplore the existence of armaments and to rejoice at the prospect of an era of peace they were not very sincere in their professions. Sooner or later somebody would take the initiative in the matter, and the Government of this country was in a better position than any other in Europe to do so. As to any danger from France, what had been said by M. Clemenceau and M. Lockroy, who knew the condition of the French Navy at this moment, proved that such apprehensions had no foundation whatever. They were told that if the Government were to invite the Governments of Europe to a Conference of the kind they would not attend. How was it known that they would not respond favourably to such an invitation? They had never been invited. He should like to know from the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Temple), who seemed to imagine he was a great authority upon this matter, what proof he had that other Governments would not favour an invitation of this kind? He repeated, that they had no right to assume that they would not get a favourable response to such an invitation. Supposing they did not reply favourably, then the world would know who was the real culprit, and who was the stumbling-block. But until we had invited them it was unfair to assume that they would decline the invitation. Some remarkable evidence was recently adduced in the columns of *The Times*, showing that the French Government, at least, would only be too glad to be invited to a Conference upon the subject. The Paris correspondent of *The Times* stated that all the leading journalists and politicians he had consulted had declared they would be rejoiced if an opportunity were afforded to them to consider the question of disarmament, although France, owing to its peculiar position, could not take the initiative—but from M. Carnot downwards every man said that France would be delighted to have an opportunity which might lead to a reduction of armaments. He thought, at least, it was the

duty of the Government to take the initiative to afford France and the world an opportunity of taking part in a Conference, and it was with a view of giving effect to that opinion that he had put his Motion upon the Paper. The right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke) stated the other night that he believed that every Government in Europe looked with an envious eye on Great Britain. He heard that expression with surprise. Although it might be true so far as Governments were concerned, he denied it so far as the people were concerned. He claimed to have as great and practical acquaintance with the views of some of the peoples of the Continent as the right hon. Baronet had with Continental politicians, and he unhesitatingly averred from the experience he had obtained from attending scores of meetings on the Continent, that there was not the slightest feeling of envy on the part of the people of France, or Germany, or Italy, or the other countries of Europe. It might be that the journalists of France and some politicians had, during the last 12 or 14 months, developed an amount of Chauvinism which was to be deeply regretted, but he was satisfied, from what he had seen in France, Germany, and Italy, that there was not the slightest feeling of envy towards the people of this country. It was true they did not make manifest that feeling at the ballot boxes, for the reason that this issue was never raised at an election on the Continent any more than here. It was generally obscured by a series of other questions, but if they had a clear issue of that nature raised in a distinct form before the people of France, Italy, Germany, and other countries, then it would be seen how strongly they would manifest their desire to live in peace with the people of this and other countries. It might be that at no distant date an opportunity would be found for raising such an issue by a distinct Motion, but in the meantime he asked the Government to weigh well the expression of opinion by the body of representative workmen to which he had referred, a number which could have been multiplied by thousands, who were opposed to this increased expenditure on the Navy. He also asked the Government not only to give heed to such an expression of opinion, but to consider whether, at a time when the nations were groaning

under the terrible burden of their armaments, they had not a splendid opportunity of taking the initiative in trying to reduce armaments. The time would come, despite the sneers of the hon. Baronet on the other side of the House, when that step would be taken, and he was sure that whatever Government essayed the task and took the first step it would cover itself with glory and receive the gratitude of the whole people.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have so much sympathy with the objects which the hon. Member has in view, and which he has well stated in the speech he has addressed to the House, and I have so much respect for the long and consistent part he has played in the interests of peace, and in bringing on all occasions before this House and this country the unutterable evils of war, that in the few remarks I have to offer he may be certain they will not be animated by a hostile spirit. If the Government of the Queen, I care not to what Party it belongs, saw that it had any possible chance of using an effectual influence to diminish what is the greatest curse of our time, the militarism which is prevailing in Europe, it would be their duty, and it would be their first wish, to use such endeavours. So far I entirely concur with my hon. Friend. He may rest assured that the present Government will always consider that as one of the first objects which they have to place before themselves. But the Government have, I must say to my hon. Friend, more authentic means of information even than the Paris correspondent of *The Times* with reference to the chances of proposals of that character, and to make such proposals and to have them met with public rejection would be not to advance, but to retard the object my hon. Friend has in view. There are some things that the hon. Member has said with which I entirely concur. I hear with great regret public declarations by responsible persons that foreign nations are our enemies. I do not believe that there is any foundation for that statement. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean has said that we are the least popular of the Powers of Europe. Well, I do not know which is the least popular Power in Europe at this moment.

Every Power seems to be arming to the teeth, and I suppose that these Powers armed to the teeth do not regard themselves as popular Powers. There are vast military ambitions abroad, ambitions which it is difficult to comprehend or to appreciate among nations which have Empires one would have supposed would have satiated any ambition. We have no power, unfortunately, to mitigate ambitions or to deal with the consequences which arise from them. I naturally avoid mentioning the name of any particular Power. If it were true that any particular Power were the enemy of England, I do not think it would be politic to speak of it and to dwell upon the enmities or the hostilities of particular Powers; certainly I do not think it is a wise thing to do so in the House of Commons or elsewhere. There is another thing in which I concur with my hon. Friend, and that is the ambitions are greatly more the acts of the Governments than the people. I believe that what he said is true, that the great mass of the people of this country do believe what the late Lord Derby truly stated in speaking of the interests of England, that the greatest of all British interests is peace. I believe there prevails throughout this country, and I hope through the mass of the people of other countries, the feeling that there is no greater curse that can afflict mankind than war; and next to that the greatest of all curses are the burdens placed, not pecuniarily only but personally, upon those who are constantly contemplating, anticipating, and preparing for war. I believe that is the necessary consequence of the state of things which, unfortunately perhaps, prevails in Europe at this time more than any other. I also agree with my hon. Friend that great demonstrations of shipbuilding or of armaments of any description are enormous evils, that they set a bad example, which is sure to be followed; and therefore if it were properly charged against the Government of this country that they were setting such an example, I should agree in my hon. Friend's condemnation of such a policy. In my opinion, however, the Navy of this country, and indeed the Navies of all countries, is principally and before all things not an aggressive but a defensive force. The aggressive forces are the great Armies.

The Navies have ceased to be in a great degree, and have lost in a great degree, their aggressive power as compared with what they possessed in former days. I cannot go into particulars of the consequences of the Declaration of Paris, but it secured the trade of various countries from attack under the shelter of a neutral flag. There is another thing not sufficiently observed—a blockade which in old days was a very effective aggressive force has very much lost its power in consequence of the facility of internal communication. I refer to these things in order to point out that the Navy is in essence a defensive and not an aggressive force. I will not yield to my hon. Friend in my abhorrence of war in all its shapes, nor in my deprecation of those armaments in anticipation of war, but I have always been a strong advocate of the supremacy of the British Navy. That is a view I stated the other day, and I also stated that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to make such proposals as would secure in future that the Navy should remain and continue to be supreme. I will state one of the great reasons why, in my opinion, the supremacy of the British Navy is a great element in the preservation of peace for this country. The great fear and danger of this country are that we should find ourselves in a position in which, from a want of sense of security and strength, we should involve ourselves in the complications of Europe and the great military Powers. If this country felt that it was not independent, that it was not strong, that it could not stand alone, it might be forced into European combinations or complications from which it would be most desirable to stand aside. I have always regarded the great model, the great example for all civilised countries to be the policy of the United States, established by George Washington 100 years ago. That was a policy of peace, a policy of abstention from complications with other countries. What was the security for that policy? It was the Atlantic that rolled between America and Europe. If you have a superior Navy you may have as great a guarantee of your own neutrality as the Atlantic affords to the United States. I desire that the Navy should be strong in order that we may be neutral, and not be called

upon to combine in matters in which we have no interest at all, simply for want of strength to support our own independence. Happily, from our situation of not being bordered, as other foreign nations are, by great Armies on their frontier, we may, in a superior Navy, have that security, and take that course of action which, I believe, is the first interest of Great Britain. If that is so, you must satisfy public opinion on that subject, even if the apprehensions of the public mind seem to you to be unreasonable. If you are to have that security, of which I have spoken, in this country, you must have that guarantee which will satisfy the public sentiment, even if it goes beyond the convictions of my hon. Friend. It is perfectly plain that, if you have a nation which is alarmed with reference to the guarantee of its own security, you will have a nation in a condition in which it is likely to be forced into measures which it might be inexpedient otherwise to adopt. Though we are now supreme, by taking no further steps we might cease to be so in the future; and I say you must reassure the people of the country on that point and allow no room, even if you choose to call it so, for panic or scare. Therefore, you must give public confidence in this, that England can maintain her own interests, and that we have no object, no intention to attack the interests of others, or to meddle in interests with which she has no concern—both of the highest importance in the policy of this country. In my opinion, those are the considerations which demand the superiority of the British Navy. The British Navy is the great guarantee of that security, of that policy which is the policy of the Government, and which I hope will be the policy of all Governments—namely, that England shall be able to rely on the force of the Navy in order to defend her shores and her Empire, and that it should be dealt with and placed on a footing so far from giving umbrage to other nations as to make it clearly understood that it is not intended for the purposes of aggression, but solely for the purposes of defence.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he desired to say a few words on the relations of the Navy and the Mercantile Marine, and also to reply to one of the observations of the hon. Member for

Haggerston, who asked what was the feeling of the trading community on this subject. He could say that the London and Associated Chambers of Commerce took such care in the collection of information and statistics that what the Government had determined to do verified the statements these Chambers made and the ground upon which they had commenced action. The hon. Member asked, who was going to invade? That was a question no one could answer; but those who had charge of the commerce of the country felt there must be no risk of invasion or attack from any quarter. The very life of commerce was not only security, but the sense of security. And yet the commercial community was as strongly in favour of peace as any portion of the English public. The hon. Member had spoken of the hypocrisy of some on this side of the House who declared for peace and against armaments. He (Sir A. Rollit) was one of those who supported the hon. Member's Resolution in favour of arbitration with the United States, and if they wanted a modern illustration of the principle he should point to the peaceable partition of Africa under Lord Salisbury. They hoped, for the sake of commerce, for permanent peace, but, on the other hand, there were times when the force of right might have to be asserted by the right of force, and it was with that object only that it was desired that the forces of this country should be in such a state as would secure those ends which had been so eloquently spoken of by the Leader of the House of Commons. He wished to speak also on the question of the resources of the Mercantile Marine for the manning of the Navy. The observation that while they talked of ships they must not forget the men was much to the point, and he desired to add that they must have the best of both. He was glad to see that the Government intended to add 6,700 men to the Navy. The figure suggested by the London Chamber of Commerce was 10,000, and he had seen arguments in favour of so high a figure as 30,000. He acknowledged gratefully the fulfilment of the promises made by the Government, and what he wanted to emphasize, with approval, was that the Government were going to draw men at once from the Mercantile Marine. Supposing the last moment were waited for, and, still more, if war were waited

for, even if the men were forthcoming, there would be a great disorganisation of the Commercial Marine, and a depletion of the Service when all its resources might be required for the supply of food and raw material. But in the event of war he would ask—and that was the serious question he put to the Secretary to the Admiralty—would they be able to get from the reserves of the Mercantile Marine any men beyond the number of the reserve itself? They would have to supply the gaps in the forces which war would create, and it must not be supposed that even the 235,000 men who formed our Mercantile Marine were an illimitable resource. The Royal Naval Reserve consisted of some 22,000; 11,000 in the first and 11,000 in the second class. With regard to the first class, it must be borne in mind that they were chiefly on foreign service and engaged on long voyages. They were all A.B.'s and good men, but there would be a considerable delay before that great source of strength could be completely utilised. What, if they picked out these A.B.'s, would be the position of the Mercantile Marine itself? And, as to the second class, the only observation to be made upon them was that they had only to take 16 drills in five years, and that consequently they could scarcely be said to be qualified to at once take their places on board vessels of war, and be expected to be familiar with the various demands that would be made upon them in a modern battleship or cruiser. He thought if more interest was taken in the Royal Naval Reserve they might be made a greater resource. How little was the interest taken in our fishermen, who were the backbone of the second class. The other day a Scotch Fisheries Bill was dropped as a matter of little concern. A Committee of the House had sat with regard to the question of English fisheries, but there was no promise or even a hint at legislation. Things were very different in France, where there was a reserve of 100,000 men, a large number of whom were fishermen, and all of whom had served in the Fleet. Hence the interest of France in her Newfoundland fisheries, from Utrecht onwards. He took the figures of the Mercantile Marine as 235,000. Of these 80,000 were A.B.'s,

and from these they must deduct 27,000 who were foreigners, and who, in the event of hostilities, would be liable to serve in their own Navy. He desired to say that most of them were men of high character and chiefly old seamen to a great extent of Scandinavian birth. With all deductions thus made for foreigners and men with less than four years' service afloat, the real reserve was reduced to the number of the Royal Naval Reserve itself, half of whom would be on distant voyages while the remainder would be destitute of the necessary skill. He was sorry he could not compliment the Government on carrying out the suggestion made by the Chamber of Shipping that four years' service should be the least qualification for an A.B., instead of adhering to the meaningless regulation that a man should not be voted entitled to be rated as A.B. without four years' service. He would urge again the immediate increase of the Reserve, or the time would come when, although having these great warships, we should not be able to man them; and the Navy itself must train up men for its own Service. He thought the conditions of our training ships needed more attention. He had been glad to receive an assurance from the Secretary to the Admiralty that the health of the *Impregnable* had improved. He hoped, too, more attention would be given to the training of the boys. The Navy offered a great career. It gave excellent education and there was admirable discipline, and all they had to do was to increase the inducements to enter it. He had another word to say in reference to our guns. In the Navy 53 per cent. were, according to the London Chamber, muzzle-loaders, while every other nation had weapons of an improved type. We were in want of 355 guns, and there was a promise that they should be rapidly supplied. He desired, however, to draw attention to the increasing retrocession in reference to the output of guns. The figures were—1890-1, 147; 1891-2, 71; 1892-3, 31; and 1893-4, 20. If the people did their duty, both as taxpayers and as members of our forces, to the State, the State must also do its duty to them, by seeing that the most recent and valuable results of both science and artizan skill were placed at their disposal; and bear-

ing in mind that this was the age in which the best weapons won, the State must take care that our forces were armed with the best that could be got. He noticed in the Estimates an item of some thousands for photographing the stars at Greenwich and the Cape. This was excellent. Nothing had been more fertile in interest or was likely to be in utility than cosmic photography, but this work was not very cognate to the Navy and should be separated, both in cost and performance. Another singularity was the Estimate for signalling services, or, rather, an incident connected with it. This also referred to the Heavens; since one Sunday on Dover Pier he had asked the officer in charge to allow him to look through his glass for a moment—a glass he had just used. The reply was, it was contrary to Regulations to let anyone look through it on a Sunday. Was there, could there be, such an absurd Admiralty Regulation? He had only to say, in conclusion, that some few weeks ago, when this question was raised (with great consideration and from no desire to create a scare, but the contrary—to prevent the possibility of one) the Chambers of Commerce received from the First Lord of the Admiralty assurances which, so far as he was able to judge, were now going to find fulfilment. He regarded this increase of armaments, however much it was to be regretted, as absolutely necessary. So long as the very life of commerce was the possibility of defending it, we must continue to keep our forces in a high state of efficiency, and he was glad that the Government, realising what he believed to be the general bent of public opinion, had decided that our commerce and our food and other supplies and the livings of our workpeople should not be jeopardised by any reasonable want of security.

MR. FORWOOD (Liverpool): There is no one in the House who would not cordially echo all the Chancellor of the Exchequer said as to the desire for the preservation of peace; and one of the best means for the preservation of peace is the maintenance by this country, to which peace is all-important and all-vital, of a Navy adequate and sufficient for the protection of its interests. The question of the adequate strength of the Navy

has been considered, I think, from too narrow a point of view. From the statement he made last December the Chancellor of the Exchequer compared the Navy of this country with the Navies of two other countries from the point of view of mere numerical superiority. But we have larger and greater interests to preserve and conserve than any other nation, and we ought to have regard not merely to the question of whether we have in point of numbers, or are providing in point of numbers, a sufficiency of vessels as compared with two other nations, but whether the number we are providing are sufficient to perform all the duties they will be called upon to perform. In 1888 the late Board of Admiralty took the question up from what, I think, was the most practical point of view. It invited the most competent of its responsible naval advisers to say what they considered should be the Naval force required by this country, if, unaided, she was to be placed in the position of being able to meet, without any doubt of success, a combination of two other great Naval Powers, having regard to their existing Fleets and the building programmes of those two nations. The reply to the invitation was the Naval Defence Act, with the reservation of the officers who made the recommendation that the building policy of other nations should be closely scrutinised, and by which the future action of this country in regard to building other vessels ought to be guided. I want to compare the position of our Navy in 1888 with the position of the Navies of France and Russia in the same year, and what its relative position would be to-day. A very interesting Return has recently been presented by the Admiralty, classifying the ships as on the 1st of January of the present year. The force deemed necessary for Great Britain, with the ships added under the Naval Defence Act, was 20 first-class battleships as against 15 possessed by France and Russia, 12 second-class battleships as against 12 possessed by these two Powers, and 11 third-class battleships as against six which France and Russia had. As regards first-class cruisers, it was deemed right, for the protection of their trade and commerce, that whilst France and Russia had 15, Great Britain ought to possess 29; and that while those two Powers possessed 13 second-class cruisers, Great Britain ought to have 44. In

effect, it was deemed necessary that Great Britain should have a superiority of five first-class battleships, five third-class battleships, 14 first-class cruisers, and 31 second-class cruisers. I will assume that the vessels now proposed to be laid down are completed, and that the vessels stated in the Return to be constructing by France and Russia are also completed, and then it will be shown that we possess 29 first-class battleships, against 28 by France and Russia, 12 second-class battleships against 21, 31 first-class cruisers against 25, and 53 second-class cruisers as against 27; so that, assuming this programme completed, we shall still be short in our naval force, as considered necessary by the responsible men connected with the Admiralty, by four first-class battleships, nine second-class battleships, eight first-class cruisers, and five second-class cruisers. I am perfectly aware that, in the First Lord's statement, we are promised that this is but part of a programme, and that, in a subsequent year, it is to be further developed, and also that it is undesirable to make plain to the world what our policy is in the following year, for fear that others might take advantage of it, and go ahead. I traverse that entirely; I do not believe in programmes of promises. We want something more than promises. But, even if these promises are to be fulfilled, I think it will be seen, from the figures I have given, that if we are to keep up our Fleet to the position deemed necessary, these promises ought to be fulfilled at a much earlier date than in the next two, three, or four years. So much for our comparative position. I will now inquire what progress we are going to make in the work. Taking last year, we voted £557,000 for large vessels which were in course of construction, and yet we find progress only made to the extent of £334,000. I find that seven battleships, excluding the armaments, are to cost £8,500,000 sterling. Yet, to advance that large programme, provision only appears to have been made for £1,335,000. The result of that action is that, next year, instead of providing £1,335,000, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whoever he may be, will have to provide for an expense of £3,500,000. It is one thing to draw up a programme, but another thing to make proper pro-

vision for it. If this promised programme is to be continued next year, the £1,250,000 which will be saved on the construction of torpedo-boats will be more than required for the extension of the programme necessary to get the Fleet to that position which is deemed necessary for the protection of the country. Therefore, it is perfectly obvious that we are now beginning a large programme with a comparatively small sum of money provided for it, and that next year the Estimates as regards shipbuilding must be increased by £2,000,000 or £2,500,000. I should not grudge that increase, or any increase that is necessary to strengthen the Navy; but I think that when Estimates for a large programme are put forward it is right to examine these Estimates closely, and see whether the provision for carrying it out is properly distributed over the year, or whether it is likely to increase burdens as years go on. The same applies to naval armaments. We have in the Estimates to lay down a Fleet which, when completed, will cost £15,500,000. The armaments and reserve ammunition for that Fleet will cost £3,800,000, and yet the Estimates voted this year for these large requirements are only £1,300,000, of which £500,000 is required for the normal services of the year, leaving £800,000 towards equipping the armaments and ordnance stores for this large fleet of vessels. On both these matters it is clear that, so far as provision in the Estimates is concerned, the amount taken is small, and we have to trust largely to the future and to promises. There is another matter in regard to which I am satisfied the Admiralty are going to find themselves in a serious difficulty. They have decried the Naval Defence Act of the late Government, and have endeavoured and have succeeded in persuading the House to decline to bind themselves to a programme by Act of Parliament; but there is one difficulty that the Government are going to encounter which was obviated by the Naval Defence Act, and that is the difficulty of estimating the amount of money that will become due next year to contractors. The dockyards are pretty well able to estimate the amount required in their own departments; but there are so many chapters of accidents in contractors' yards that it is impossible to arrive at a very close

figure as that which contractors will earn. In the course of the Naval Defence Act the Estimates of the naval experts were wrong to the extent of as much as £1,000,000. In the coming year the Contract Vote amounts to £2,920,000, and what would happen by reason of the repudiation of a system like that of the Naval Defence Act? The contractors might be largely behindhand with their work; and if they are behindhand to the extent of £500,000, that amount will have to be surrendered to the Treasury, and will become a charge on the taxpayers of the country for the same purpose in the following year, with the result that the whole of the national finances will be thrown out by that amount. I do not think the right hon. Baronet in charge of the Admiralty would find it possible, if he had any large amount of the contract money unearned, to do otherwise than return it to the Treasury, and every sixpence so returned has to be provided by the House in the following year. I sympathise with the Admiralty in wishing to make use of unexpended money upon stores and not being anxious to pay it back to the Treasury; but the Secretary to the Admiralty has complained of the conduct of the late Government and myself in doing the same thing. With an increase in building a reduction on gun estimates and projectiles necessarily implies an increase in future years. There are several other points which I should have wished to dilate upon had time permitted; but I can now only summarise them. The type of vessels of the *Resolution* class exhibit a considerable increase in length over ironclads previously built. I think we get that class of vessels made as long as is reasonably possible, having regard to the weight of their armour and to the armoured citadel which they have to carry. I congratulate the Admiralty on the greater length, by 10 feet, that has been decided upon, for I have had every confidence in the stability of great length. I assure the House, however, that when the designs of these vessels were considered, the extreme length was given having regard to the work the ships have to do, the weights they have to carry, and the distribution of their cargo. With reference to the *Victoria*, that vessel, I believe, was laid down in 1885 or 1886. The present Naval Constructor was not in any way responsible for the design.

Any imperfections in that vessel as to sub-division fore and aft have not been followed in the vessels that have since been designed. In regard to the *Resolution*, I believe that she is satisfactory, and that there is no danger. I believe, moreover, that she returned owing to a misconception on the part of her commanding officer. It has been stated that the vessel returned for coal; but she had plenty on board. The origin of the trouble arose from the vessel going to sea in the winter, and being exposed to a heavy gale in the Bay of Biscay, without the necessary steps having been taken by her officers to batten down the hatches and cover up the ventilators, through which the water found its way below. There are other matters that I should have liked to have dealt with, but I understand we are to have an opportunity after Easter of dealing more at length with the Navy Estimates. As a full and free discussion is promised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I postpone whatever other observations I desire to make.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) appealed to the House to allow the Deputy Speaker now to leave the Chair, and said he would reserve the remarks he had to make in reply to the various points raised in the course of the Debate until they were in Committee on the Votes. Gentlemen who were anxious to speak would be able to do so on Vote A and Vote I.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he would give way to his hon. Friend's appeal. He wished to say, however, that he did not agree with the Jingo speech just delivered, and on another Vote he should take an opportunity of objecting to wasteful expenditure on the Army and Navy.

Question, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

[Mr. MELLOR in the Chair.]

1. 83,400, Men and Boys.

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : Mr. Mellor, before I proceed to the statement which it will be my duty to make in reference to the new proposals of the

Government in connection with the Navy, perhaps it will be convenient if I deal with a few of the points which have been raised in the course of the Debate before Mr. Deputy Speaker left the Chair. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Eastbourne mentioned various points with respect to the payment of the coastguard, second-class stokers, leading stokers, chief engine-room artificers, and warrant officers, and suggested that they should be referred to the Committee of which the gallant officer who a short time ago was First Sea Lord—Sir A. Hoskins—is a member. There would be some difficulty in referring any of these questions to that Committee, because it has to do entirely with the officering of the Navy and with the working of the Childers' scheme; and questions of this kind, however important in themselves, are not germane to the inquiry of that Committee. But if my hon. and gallant Friend will bring any of these points under the notice of those who are responsible at the Admiralty he will find that several of them have already been looked into, and that others are under consideration, and any representation which he may make will have most careful consideration. These matters are, however, by no means so simple as they seem when they are individually brought under the notice of the House by an hon. Member in his position. It is easy, for instance, to bring forward the case of the stokers or the case of the warrant officers, and to make out a very good case; but what the Admiralty have to do is to consider the case of any particular class of men or officers in relation to other classes of officers and men. When dealing with one you cannot help touching the interests of others, and my hon. and gallant Friend need not fear that the representations which he made last Session were not duly considered because I have made no announcement on behalf of the Admiralty in the House in regard to them. I shall presently have something to say about the warrant officers, and I assure my hon. and gallant Friend that the position and pay of the warrant officers and the other classes of whom he has spoken constantly occupy our attention at the Admiralty. I am bound to say one or two words with respect to what fell from my hon. Friend

who asked me why we did not draw more men to the Navy from the Mercantile Marine. If he will look at the Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, which is now before the House, he will find that we are going to take a new departure, and are attempting to introduce 800 men from the Mercantile Marine and other outside sources in order to meet the increased demands that are being made upon us. The hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool spoke of the officers of the Royal Naval Reserve, and I would simply refer him to the third paragraph of the First Lord's Statement on this subject, which is as follows :—

"The number of officers to be entered for 12 months' training on board ships of the Fleet has been raised from 50 to 70."

I now turn to the statement I have to make, in the course of which I hope to refer as far as may be necessary to other points that have been raised in the course of the Debate. The statement I have to make on behalf of the Admiralty respecting the new proposals may suffer a little from the mist and drizzle of the long Debate, and if it should have made my powder a little damp so that my projectiles do not go off with energy, I hope the Committee will make a little allowance for the circumstances under which, not for the first time, the statement of the Representative of the Admiralty is made in this House. It is not necessary that I should enter in full detail into all the various parts of the scheme which form our complete proposals, because hon. Members already have them before them very fully in print in the Statement of the First Lord. What I propose to do is to dwell somewhat on certain salient points of our scheme, and explain them as briefly and as clearly as I can. It will be in the knowledge of Members of this House that when the present Government came into Office ships were being built under the Naval Defence Act, and I do not think there would be any disposition on the part of the Committee to find fault with the policy of the Government last year in introducing a modest programme. The noble Lord opposite mentioned a few months ago that in the previous year, and I think also in 1887, he had introduced what he described as a modest programme. Our Estimates last year

amounted to £14,250,000—almost the same amount as for the three preceding years. The year now ending is the last of the five years of the Naval Defence Act. It appears to be an appropriate time, therefore, for examining our naval strength as increased by five years' efforts, and as compared with the strength of Foreign Fleets. I will not go into statistics as to the relative strength of Foreign Navies, as we had a long Debate upon the subject a short time ago. There has been presented a Return which I moved for on behalf of the Admiralty which states correctly the strength of Great Britain and of five Foreign Powers in ships of war. I will only say this—that anyone impartially considering that Return at the date at which I speak—perhaps I might speak more emphatically of the coming month of April—must come to the conclusion that our present strength in battleships and cruisers, as compared with that of Foreign Powers, is satisfactory, and that there is nothing of which we need be afraid. But vigorous additions have been made for some years past, and are being made, to Foreign Navies, particularly those of France and Russia, and therefore the special efforts we have made during the last five years must be followed by further efforts continued over years to come. Moreover, the addition of the 70 vessels of the Naval Defence Act Fleet, and the further additions now projected, render it necessary that we should have more armaments, more men, and more reserves, with consequent increases in the Wages, Victualling, and Medical Votes, and a prospective increase of Naval and Marine Pensions. So that it is not in shipbuilding only that the tide is rising, and must rise for some time. Comparing the Estimates now proposed to the House with those of last year, the following are the principal increases :—Shipbuilding, £2,267,000; armaments, £68,000; wages nearly £300,000; Victualling and Medical Votes over £150,000; Royal Naval Reserve close on £34,000; works, £270,000; other Votes, £37,000; making a total of £3,126,000. Before I come to the great increase—the shipbuilding programme—let me say a few words on the two other principal causes of increase—first, manning; secondly, works. It has been recognised in the criticisms

that have been made upon our naval strength that, whereas during recent years very great additions have been made to the British Fleet, until last year no serious effort has been made to meet the increasing necessity for manning the Navy. A Manning Committee was wisely appointed by the late Government, and it made the necessary inquiries; but the chief burden of meeting the increasing demand for men falls upon the successors of the late Government. ["No."] I am surprised to hear that contradiction; but I do not wish to go into the matter in a controversial spirit. It is obvious, however, that the making of great additions to the Navy must leave the legacy to the succeeding Government of providing the additional officers and men necessary to man the Navy. I do not wish to carry it further than that. We have to face that necessity, and I claim we are facing it without the slightest hesitation, and are doing what is necessary to meet the necessities of the case. The increase we have proposed this year is a very large one. It has been misstated in some quarters that the increase has been 5,100 men; but the real increase is 6,700 men. Last year I explained the constitution and objects of the Manning Committee. It consisted of three Naval Lords and two naval experts; and I repeat what I said last year, that we are greatly indebted to the efforts of that Committee for having thoroughly investigated the question and settled the principles on which the manning of the Fleet should be based. I explained last year that the Committee considered what ships would form the War Fleet of 1894 and what should be the revised complements of the ships. Now, there is a permanent Complement Committee which draws up the complements for all newly-designed ships. The number of men necessary for the Fleet has to be considered by the Committee two years in advance. It is necessary to look much further ahead—about 10 years—in order to estimate the number of officers we may want. The proportion the number of men to be drawn from the Reserve for the Fleet in time of war should bear to the permanent Reserve has been carefully settled. We are continuing to enter boys at the rate of 3,700 men a year, and as a result of that we shall be able to meet the wants of the Fleet for 1895, so far as

existing ships are concerned. But we have to meet the additions to the Fleet, some of which are being rapidly made—for example, the torpedo-boat destroyers. We have also to meet the larger requirements of our modern ships as compared with the ships which preceded them. We therefore propose that 800 men shall be entered direct from shore—that is to say, from the Mercantile Marine, the Royal Naval Reserve, &c. Turning to the engine-room complements, last year I prepared the Committee for an addition to the engine-room and artificer ratings proportionate to modern needs. In the coming year the following additions are proposed:—100 chief engine-room artificers, 250 engine-room artificers, and 2,439 stokers, including 272 chief stokers. We have found it necessary to increase the higher stoker ratings. Increasing the number of chief stokers has had a very beneficial effect in attracting a large number of stokers to qualify as mechanics, and thus become more useful. In the case of the stokers, as in that of the seamen, the necessity of endeavouring to secure a due proportion of men on the permanent list, as distinguished from reserves and new entries, has led to the decision to make these large additions. I think that the Committee will learn with satisfaction that in this, as in other respects, we have taken measures during the last few months to enable the additions which we propose to be made at once with the least possible delay. The months which have passed since the various proposals of the Government were matured some months ago have been most beneficially utilised, and our plans so arranged that no time whatever will be lost, and measures can be taken at once as soon as the first Vote has been passed by the House of Commons. One word, Sir, about the interesting and important subject of warrant officers. There is not a large addition during the present year. The reason for that is that there were other points which were more urgent. It is considered there would be no difficulty in adding sufficiently to the number of warrant officers in case of emergency. This could be done partly from the coastguard and partly by promotion of petty officers from those who have qualified and are on the roster for

promotion. The subject of warrant officers who will be required to meet the increased needs of the Navy is now receiving special consideration, and it is intended to make sufficient provision for future years. I now pass to a subject which occupied the time of the House for a considerable period yesterday evening. I mean the Royal Naval Reserve. The importance of connecting the Royal Naval Reserve with the Service afloat is clearly recognised by the Admiralty: 700 men of the Royal Naval Reserve are now to have six months' training with the Fleet, and we are of opinion that if that practice be successfully carried out year by year the Reserve will be greatly increased in value by this training. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Holderness Division of Yorkshire gave some very interesting and pregnant observations to the House on the subject of the Royal Naval Reserve, and it would not be respectful to him if I did not briefly notice these observations. If I fail to notice some of them I can assure him that all will receive due consideration. He asks whether the 800 men who are enrolled from the shore as seamen in the Fleet will be entered for a shorter period than other seamen? We are endeavouring to attract these men not only from the Royal Naval Reserve, but from the Mercantile Marine and the seafaring population, and we hope to get a good number of the fishing population. They will be admitted between the ages of 18 and 28 years. They will sign engagements either for 12 years' continuous service or for five years' non-continuous service, and they will receive exactly the same pay and advantages and pension as the other seamen of the Royal Navy. I think that is a satisfactory answer to the question asked by my hon. and gallant Friend. He also put to me some questions as to the expectations of the Government with respect to the number of Reserves who would be available for war, and quoted the opinion of the Committee presided over by Sir George Tryon, that 10,000 men would be available at the outbreak of war. I may say that the Admiralty share that opinion. The hon. and gallant Gentleman stated his own expectation that we should get 20,000 Reserve men after a time during war, and he asked what was

our opinion. I think his guess is as much entitled to receive weight as any guess made by the Admiralty itself. We think that it is a matter of surmise. Perhaps we have our own calculations, but we do not wish to hazard any surmise of our own in the House, and we are quite prepared to accept my hon. and gallant Friend's guess as a very fair one. I am sure my hon. and gallant Friend will excuse me from going further as to that matter, and will recognise that it is a wise policy on the part of the Admiralty not to explain the details of the manning arrangements which they have in contemplation for war time. He thinks that, at a small cost, a very considerable Reserve may be obtained. I can only refer him to the Report of Sir George Tryon's Committee. I can assure him that we consider our present Reserve a very satisfactory force, but we doubt whether it is desirable to have so large a Reserve that we should be tempted to have too large a proportion of Reserve men in the complements of the ships in relation to the permanent men. As I said just now, the proportion which the one should bear to the other has been carefully considered and settled. The hon. and gallant Gentleman also asked me about the 10 years' men and the 12 years' men as a source of supply to the Royal Naval Reserve. I think he must not look too much to that source. In time of peace 70 per cent. of these men re-engage, and that is a satisfactory fact, and shows that the great bulk of the men, after serving their 10 or 12 years, do not desire to sever their connection with the Navy. Out of the remaining 30 per cent. we hope to get a good many in time of war. I now turn to a subject of great difficulty, upon which I can say but little—and that is the need of officers. The Admiralty have taken one important step in respect to that, but before I mention it perhaps I may say that the lieutenants' list is now beginning to rise. The period of difficulty through which we have been passing seems to be coming to an end. The subject is one of interest and of great importance. The Admiralty have appointed a Committee, upon which Sir A. Hoskins and Sir R. Welby have happily consented to serve, who are investigating the whole of the difficult subject—the numbers, promotion, and retirement of executive

officers, and the results of the scheme of Mr. Childers—and when that Committee reports we hope to get most valuable light upon the question how to secure sufficient officers in the lower rank of our Service without unduly flooding those ranks and thus stagnating promotion. In the meantime, the entries of cadets in the *Britannia* will be kept up. In the time of the noble Lord opposite they were increased, and from 1886 until now they have exceeded 100 a year, having averaged 128 in the last four years. On the subject of engineer officers, we are making an endeavour, which I hope will meet with success, to enter engineers direct, by which we hope to have a considerable accession to our numbers. We are also proposing additions to the Engineers' Training School at Keyham. My hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, in his picturesque and impressive speech, told us that we do not pay our engineers enough, and do not treat them well enough, and that that is the reason why we do not have a sufficient response to our invitation to engineers to join. He says that we ought to give proper pay and provide proper housing for the engineers. I would say on this point that my noble Friend the First Lord had an interview with hon. Members who represent the engineers last year, and I think they will admit that very attentive consideration was given to the points they brought before him. If they will again approach my noble Friend and the Admiralty and give us the benefit of their advice in this difficult and important question we shall be very happy to consider the whole matter in the light of the arguments they put before us. I do not, however, think it would be useful to enter into a discussion on the subject across the floor of the House. I would much rather that a friendly conference should be brought about, such as we had last year, which bore good fruit. I think it would bear good fruit this year. We fully recognise that the engineering element is one of the most important elements in the Navy in existing circumstances, and I need hardly say that one and all of us are anxious to do full justice to the engineers and engine-room complements. If there is any grievance we are anxious to remedy it. I confess that there is one point which was brought forward by an hon. Gentleman opposite in which I feel that there is some apparent hardship, and that

is that we have had to call upon our engineer officers to give up their optional retirement at the age of 50. But that has been absolutely necessary in the interests of the country. If, however, they can show that there is really something that ought to be done for them in consequence of our having called upon them to make that sacrifice in the interests of the Navy we are perfectly open to conviction on that point, and if my hon. Friend and those who have spoken on the subject will bring the matter forward we shall be prepared to consider it. But I cannot say more than that. I do not know that there is anything more in connection with engineers that I need dwell upon to-night. I think that everything is covered by the assurance I have given that we are ready to hear their case—one of the most important cases that could be brought before us and one which calls for careful consideration. I have now, I think, dealt with the various points in connection with the manning of the Navy, and I pass on to the consideration of the Works Vote. That Vote provides for the dredging, and for certain defences of our harbours, and the construction of new docks; coaling jetties, naval and marine barracks, magazines, and so forth. Last year it was evident that the Works Vote must rise, although, having had such short experience at the Admiralty, we were not then prepared to increase it. A year's careful survey of this question has convinced Lord Spencer that a large expenditure from year to year will be necessary to meet the necessities of the case. Among the works we have in hand at the present moment are the two great docks being constructed at Portsmouth, which will be capable of holding the very largest ships. Progress has been made with very important dredging work in connection with harbours. The approach to Chatham in the Medway has been deepened, the approach to Portsmouth Harbour has been greatly improved, and a beginning has been made of the dredging necessary for the mooring of our great vessels at Portsmouth, and other dredging works are going on at Plymouth. Both at Portsmouth and Devonport extensive dredging is necessary. The Medway will have to be widened in order to make the approach to Chatham Dockyard satisfactory. The works on the extension of the existing mole at Gib-

raltar have been begun. The new works proposed by the Admiralty in the present Estimates are, taking them to some extent in their order of importance, first, the beginning of the very great work of the extension of the docks and basins at Devonport Dockyard. That scheme, known as the Keyham Extension, has been under discussion since 1890 and has received very thorough consideration at the hands of the present Board of Admiralty. It includes three additional docks and a large basin area, wharfage, and, as part of the new works, a coaling jetty. These great works cannot be completed in less than 10 years, though of course a certain part of them will be completed sooner, nor will it be possible to commence them before the end of the year, until the scheme is quite ready for carrying out. Now I come to the question of naval barracks. A few words were said upon that subject yesterday by an hon. Gentleman opposite. He seemed to be under the impression that experience showed that it was desirable during the comparatively brief period our seamen have to spend in port they should be housed in ships rather than in barracks. That view has been shared, I believe, by some persons of authority, but the opinion at which we have arrived is this—that to men who have to suffer various discomforts during the number of years they are at sea, it is a great advantage to be placed in barracks when they are on shore, and we can point to the experience gained at the Gunnery School at Portsmouth, and at the great naval barracks at Devonport, as establishing the view that it is an inestimable advantage to have well-constructed barracks to receive our seamen when they come on shore rather than to place them in hulks, where they encounter so many discomforts and where they are exposed to some risk of fire. There is also the further objection to such an arrangement, that these hulks occupy valuable space in our basin area which, with our increasing requirements, it is most desirable to keep open. In connection with this subject of barracks, I may say that the swimming arrangements for sailors and stokers have not been lost sight of, and I hope that before long we shall have such arrangements as will enable sailors, stokers, and Marines to have a full opportunity of learning to swim. The convict prison at Chatham

being now no longer needed for convicts, the Admiralty have been able to complete a scheme, not without great alterations and considerable expenditure, to alter the present prison-like aspect of the buildings and fit them as barracks. There will also be a considerable extension of the Keyham Training College for Engineers, which is now overcrowded. Another increase in expenditure is caused by the necessity of adding to the accommodation for Marines—of whom 500 were added to the establishment last year, and 500 this year—at the barracks at Walmer. That is a most desirable place for training young Marines, and at present we are obliged to shorten the period. Consequently, it is proposed to add to the barracks sufficiently to enable us to keep the young Marine recruits longer at Walmer. With regard to other works, the extension of the mole at Gibraltar has been taken in hand, but we are impressed with the necessity, not only of carrying out that work, but also of beginning a further extension on the mole, so that the ships within the great harbour at Gibraltar may be sufficiently protected from torpedo attack. We have also come to the conclusion that the time has come when a dock must be constructed at Gibraltar, and the first step in that direction will be taken this year. Stress has been laid by an hon. Member on the necessity for greater accommodation for the storage of ammunition at foreign stations. We have introduced into the Estimates proposals for adding to the magazine accommodation at Malta and Gibraltar, and I hope that our stores of ammunition at these places will be brought up to a satisfactory amount. I will now turn to the question of shipbuilding. The total Shipbuilding Vote this year is close on £7,000,000, or an increase of £2,267,000 over that of the current year. The first point to which I wish to draw attention under this head is that by a concentration of effort on the completion of the Naval Defence Act programme we have been able to exceed the anticipations we formed at the time we took Office. The stock complaint made against most Governments on first taking Office has been that they were so intent on beginning new ships that they delayed to complete the ships already in hand. But the desire of the present Government has

been to do the reverse, and in taking this course we have acted upon the advice of the naval members of the Board of Admiralty, who were colleagues of the noble Lord opposite. There have been complaints from some quarters, however, about the course we have pursued in pushing to completion the ships under the Naval Defence Act, showing how impossible it is for any Government, whatever it may do—and especially for a Liberal Government—to please some people. We have two very good reasons for the policy which we have adopted, and they are these. In the first place, ships pushed forward to completion promptly are always cheaper and generally better than those whose construction is allowed to drag on for a long time. Secondly, by this effort we have done our best to bring the Naval Defence fleet to its full fighting strength at the end of the term fixed, and thus to fulfil the hopes of the framers of the Act in 1889 and the intentions of the Parliament which passed that Act. All the 10 battleships which were proposed under the Act are now either in commission or in such a state that they could go into action next week if necessary. Of the 42 cruisers all are complete and ready for service with the exception of five, and those are so far advanced that we shall be able to finish them during the next few months; and of the torpedo gunboats three or four only remain to be completed. Coming to the year on which we are entering, the first object on which part of our shipbuilding money has to be spent is the completion of the Naval Defence Act ships, and for that purpose we propose to vote the sum of £281,000. The second head of expenditure is the dockyard ships now in hand of the further programme not under the Naval Defence Act. These are the *Renown*, the *Majestic*, and the *Magnificent*—three first-class battleships—three cruisers of the *Talbot* class, and two sloops building at Sheerness. The third division of outlay is the contract shipbuilding now in hand, including the *Powerful* and the *Terrible*, two first-class cruisers, building at Barrow and on the Clyde, and 42 torpedo-boat destroyers, two or three of which are either complete or in an advanced condition. There are also 10 torpedo-boats of the first class. What I have enumerated is no inconsiderable amount of work. But the new proposals have

still to be added, making a fourth head of outlay. These are, five dockyard battleships, two contract battleships, six contract cruisers of the second class, and two sloops. Hence the work in hand in the dockyards will be, besides the completion of the five cruisers under the Naval Defence Act, eight first-class battleships, three second-class cruisers, and four sloops. In private yards the work will be two first-class battleships, two first-class cruisers, six second-class cruisers, and 36 torpedo-boat destroyers. Complaint has been made that we are proposing too much money for the *Majestic* and *Magnificent*, and too little to the new ships; but I am satisfied that the Controller of the Navy has very wisely distributed the money, in view of the way in which the *Royal Sovereign* was pushed forward. That was a record, but with the *Majestic* the present Board hopes to create a new record, profiting by the experience gained on that occasion. The *Majestic* is really growing at Portsmouth by leaps and bounds, and 850 tons of material have been already worked in. The experience gained from year to year at the Admiralty enables work to be pushed forward with increasing rapidity. The total amount, including armaments, which it is proposed to vote for new construction under these Estimates, is a sum close on £5,000,000, or in actual figures £4,950,000. For new construction under Vote 8, exclusive of armaments, we propose to vote £4,500,000, as compared with £2,398,700 voted in 1893. Taking separately the ships not under the Naval Defence Act, including armaments, we propose to vote for them £4,669,000, or excluding armaments £4,219,000, as against £1,017,000 proposed in the Estimates of the current year, an increase of £3,202,000 for new construction excluding armaments. Out of the £4,500,000 for new construction, dockyard labour will absorb £800,000, and of the balance, £3,700,000, the larger part will go to manufacturing and other industries outside the dockyards. So does a large part of the expenditure on armaments. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Ormskirk Division made a calculation as to the cost of our programme. He took only the proposals before the House, for one year, and that is not a fair statement of the total cost of the programme of the Government.

This Programme will involve for the five years ensuing a very liberal provision by Parliament of public money to meet the needs of the Navy. It will involve more money next year, and in the following year than this year. Unfortunately, at the very moment when the cost of this increased expenditure falls upon the nation we have still the unpleasant prospect of having to pay for two years the annuity of nearly £1,500,000, or a total of £2,857,000, for the contract ships built under the Naval Defence Act. Those ships have been completed, but the cost, £10,000,000, instead of being paid in the five years, was spread over seven years, of which two have still to run. In this statement I do not wish, unnecessarily, to open up any controversial topics; but I will just say this. We were told by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, on the 13th of May, 1889, that—

“It is an exceptional effort which we are making. We are both making up for arrears and forestalling the efforts of the future.”

We were led to hope that we should be able, at the end of five years, to revert to so-called normal expenditure. This anticipation was the justification—the only possible justification—for not bearing in the five years the burden of five years' work. The work under the Naval Defence Act, though costly, has been good. But of this we feel satisfied: If the House of Commons could have foreseen the impossibility of returning to normal expenditure at the end of the five years and the necessity of spending another £3,000,000 in excess of the normal Estimates, and a still further increase in 1895, the House would never have assented to this feature of the Naval Defence Act, and would have insisted that the burden of the five years should be borne in the five years, and that sufficient for the succeeding period would be, I will not say the evil, but the burden thereof. After the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff I need not go very fully into the point raised by the hon. Member for Belfast. My hon. Friend said that if the hon. Gentleman could produce a ram which could do what he said, the Government would not hesitate to adopt it. I can only invite him to submit his design to the Admiralty. We should accept with the greatest joy an indestructible ship which is capable of going amongst formidable

ironclads and destroying them one after the other, while it is perfectly invulnerable itself. There are hon. Members present who have submitted plans to the Admiralty, and they have been very fairly considered; and I can only regret that the hon. Gentleman opposite did not take the opportunity which was open to him last week of meeting the present Director of Naval Construction at the Institution of Naval Architects, where the whole of the matters which the hon. Member has brought forward might have been discussed by experts.

SIR E. HARLAND: I wish to say that at the very time when Mr. White's valuable paper was being discussed I was very closely engaged on the Royal Commission on Labour. I could not possibly have attended, although I was most anxious to do so.

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Of course I at once accept what the hon. Gentleman has said. I only want to indicate that exceedingly technical points of that kind can be far better discussed among experts than across the floor of this House. The hon. Gentleman thought it would be desirable that designs for warships should be referred either to a Committee of this House or to a Committee, including engineers and representatives of the Mercantile Marine. That question was dealt with by the hon. Member for Cardiff, who objected to an embargo being placed on the Constructor of the Naval Department. The Admiralty consider themselves responsible for designs, and they would not be discharging their duty if they surrendered that responsibility. It is a great responsibility, but they have the advantage of first-rate expert advice, and the Board consists to a very important degree of naval men of experience whose opinions on such subjects are entitled to great weight. I think it is a satisfaction to the country that they should accept the responsibility for designs of ships and not place it on a Committee of the House of Commons or any other Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff asks for an assurance that the new ships will be absolutely invulnerable against guns, rams, and torpedoes. He knows that is too much to expect; and I venture to say to the House that anyone occupying my position ought to be chary

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of giving any such assurances. The next war—long may it be off—will alone solve many of these problems, but I do say that we believe our new ships will be strong enough to keep rams and torpedoes at a respectful distance, and that they possess qualities of offence and defence which will not be second to those of any of the existing battleships of the world. It will be satisfactory to the House to know that all possible preliminary steps have been taken in connection with the carrying out of our programme. Orders for commencing the two big battleships can consequently be given to-morrow. Invitations for tenders, with the consent of the Treasury, were issued some time ago; they have come in, have been examined, and have been provisionally settled, and the expenditure on the earlier dockyard battleships has already begun. More than £350,000 has been taken for the three which are to be commenced early, and about £60,000 for two which cannot be begun at Portsmouth and Chatham till the end of the year. It is absolutely impossible to commence ships in the dockyards without regard to the work which is in hand, and that is the reason why a comparatively small sum is taken for those two ships, though it is double the amount which was proposed for two battleships which were put in the Estimates of 1892-3 by our predecessors. For pushing on the *Majestic* and *Magnificent* more than £160,000 in labour alone, or more than £836,000, including materials and contract work, is taken. The *Renown* will cost about £266,000 this year. These measures for prompt commencement and rapid pushing forward of ships now in hand are part of the fulfilment of the assurance which was given to the House by the right hon. Member for Midlothian on behalf of the Government that steps would be taken, with Treasury sanction where necessary, for hastening preparations and avoiding loss of time. I ask the Committee also to remember that, as we fully maintain our supremacy as a Naval Power, so also we maintain the superiority in the speed at which we can build ships of war. Not only is that the case, but we can build considerably cheaper than Foreign Powers. It cannot be too clearly understood by our neighbours that we recognise the fact that the United Kingdom cannot afford to allow

any combination to endanger our supremacy on the seas. Whatever it may cost, whatever sacrifice it may entail, we shall keep our Navy capable of defending our interests against any combination which can be formed against it, and of performing the exceptional duties in time of peace, and the duties of a different nature in time of war, which fall on our ships. This is our defence, as an Empire of islands at home and in distant seas, an Empire of colonies and dependencies throughout the world. When we say this, we say it in no warlike or defiant spirit, but as a truism, as a doctrine which is accepted in this country by people of all shades of opinion, as a recognition of what is vitally essential to our commerce, to our security, and to our very existence. We are asked in some quarters to publish our five years' programme. I gladly notice that by some other critics of both shades of politics we are strongly urged to do nothing of the kind. The opinion of the Government is this—that the only possible effect of prematurely publishing our programme is to deprive us of an advantage which we may as well retain as long as possible. It is right that we should look ahead; that what we do this year should be part of a scheme thoroughly worked out by naval and expert authority at the Admiralty, considered by the Government, and approved in time to allow of the careful preparation of designs for various types of vessels of improved or novel construction. The scheme has been worked out, and will remain. The preparation of the designs has been commenced, and the newer types will be built in the coming years of the period; and I may say on behalf of the Government that it is their deliberate resolve that if they have an opportunity they will continue their effort through the five years and carry into full effect their programme. That is my answer to my right hon. Friend, who says this is a programme of promises. He may regard it as such; but I ask the House generally to accept our word that it is our intention to persevere with the programme, and, if we have the opportunity, to carry it into effect. If hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite take our places and come into Office we entertain not the slightest fear that they would go back from a programme which has been settled by their

predecessors, and which is based on the best expert advice. Risk may arise of undue stimulus to the increase of rival efforts abroad when a five years' programme is announced with a flourish of trumpets. We do what we can to minimise that risk by confining our published details as to ships and money to one year. But how can we best check this competitive race on the part of other Powers? My answer is this—by evidence that one Party is quite as alive as the other to the paramount duty of maintaining our strength on the sea. And if to that evidence he added the salutary lesson that neither Party in this House will be tempted to Party attack and Party re-creation on the subject of our Navy—a subject on which we should all agree, and which should be lifted above the level of faction and petty wrangle—then we may hope that it will be once for all understood that nothing which any other State can do will prevent our maintaining the security of our commerce, the defence of our possessions throughout the world, and the command of the seas. Sir, I now submit these large and carefully-considered proposals to the House, in full confidence that they will be adopted by common consent in the true interests of the security, prosperity, and peace of our people and possessions throughout the world.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): The fact that Her Majesty's Government have proposed to the House Estimates so largely in excess of those of last year, coupled with the speeches of the present Prime Minister and other Members of the Government, may be accepted by the House as an earnest that the Government are determined to do their best to bring up the Navy to the standard of strength at which both Parties in the House agree it is necessary it should be maintained. Therefore, I feel it is the duty of those who in the past have urged upon the Government the necessity of increased expenditure, to do their best to accept the proposals now submitted in the spirit in which they are made, to let bygones be bygones, to refer to the past as little as possible, and to concentrate our attention in trying to make the proposal of the Government a really workable scheme which shall secure for the British Navy a standard of strength superior to that of any other

two Foreign Powers in the world. The difficulty with which we are confronted on the threshold is that while the Government ask the House of Commons to give them its confidence in respect of a five years' scheme they only reveal to the House one-fifth part of that scheme. I am bound to say that the reasons which have been given for this maintenance of secrecy will not stand a moment's analysis. What is the objection to taking Parliament into the confidence of the Government? Every Government has done so before. It was done when Lord Northcote's three years' scheme was proposed. And when the late Government brought forward their five years' scheme, not only did they tell the House what they proposed to do, but they gave a full record of the financial liabilities which the scheme would impose on the revenues of the country. It is impossible, therefore, for Parliament to have confidence in a scheme of the financial magnitude of which it has no knowledge. The right hon. Gentleman's objection to the publication of the scheme is that foreign nations will find out the details. But does the right hon. Gentleman really suppose that he can keep the scheme secret from any Foreign Government during five years? The only result will be that every Admiralty in Europe will be in full possession of the details of the Ministerial plans, and the body that will be kept in ignorance is the House of Commons, which has to vote the money. I cannot, therefore, understand why the Government will not take the House of Commons into its confidence. The right hon. Gentleman had gone at great length into various proposals in connection with his scheme. He proposes to spend a very large amount of money under the head of buildings and works. I have no doubt these are necessary, but the amounts which it is proposed to expend during the coming year appears in many cases to be absurdly out of proportion to the total sum, which is put at £4,130,000. For example, they propose to spend £940,000 on dredging, but the amount taken in the Estimates for the year is £85,000, which means at this rate spreading the expenditure over a period of 12 years. On Keyham Basin they propose to spend £2,000,000, but the amount taken for the coming year is only £1,000, and at this rate it will take 2,000 years to complete the expenditure.

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The next liability is £783,000 for expenditure abroad. The amount taken for the year is £23,000, which means that it will take 36 years to pass before the work is finished. Then for barracks, which are urgently required, it is proposed to spend £350,000, and £1,000 is all that is asked to be voted now, so that these barracks, which are urgently required, cannot be finished for 350 years. It is, therefore, evident that if the present generation is to have any benefit from these works and buildings we must contemplate a very much larger expenditure in future years. I repeat, that it is right that the House should be taken into the confidence of the Government; because if a change of Government takes place, how can the incoming Government be pledged to a scheme the full extent of which they do not know? I venture to repeat that it is only right that the House should be taken into the confidence of the Government, because if a change of Government should take place how could the incoming Government be pledged to a scheme, the full extent of which they were not aware of? The only method by which continuity can be maintained, and the adherents of both Parties in the House kept to a scheme of naval construction, is to take the House into confidence and secure the assent of both Parties to the scheme. We should then all be pledged to it, and no matter what changes may take place the scheme must be carried out. As to the Manning Vote, it is said that no attempt was made by the late Admiralty Board to meet the manning difficulties engendered by the Naval Defence Act. A more astonishing statement I never heard, and it was denied in the flattest and plainest manner by Lord Spencer. Six or eight months after Lord Spencer came into Office he dealt with the question of manning. Did the noble Lord then say that the late Government made no attempt to meet the manning difficulty entailed by the Naval Defence Act? On the contrary, the noble Lord, after being six months in Office, so far from stating that the late Government had neglected the manning difficulty held out the hope that certain reductions might be made, but that they could not be made just then; that it was impossible to reduce the number of officers and men then serving in the Fleet, and that he was not prepared then

to suggest any change in that direction. The fact is that for years before the late Government left Office they raised by annual increments the number of men from 60,000 odd to 74,000 odd. It is therefore an act of gross injustice to say that the late Government ignored the manning difficulty.

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I beg the noble Lord's pardon; I said nothing of the kind. I recognised the fact that the noble Lord opposite appointed the Committee, a most useful Committee, but I said what was perfectly true, that the burden of the increase in the number of men had fallen upon the present Government.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I differ altogether from my right hon. Friend. We increased the manning number by 15,000 men, and the Reserve by 6,000. I undertake to say that we provided the great bulk of the men necessary to man the Fleet as anticipated under the Naval Defence Act. Of course, if you subsequently add a fresh number of ships you must increase your numbers of men. I am perfectly satisfied that 5,000 additional men will cover all the requirements, as far as manning is concerned, for the ships comprised in the Naval Defence Act. We are now told that there is to be an increase of 6,700 men, but I cannot see how that total is arrived at. But I am quite willing to recognise that the Government have dealt liberally with the manning difficulty, and that their proposals are in the main satisfactory. The number seems really to be 5,700, that is, 1,000 short. Of that number, 1,600 is automatic; 800 are seamen entered direct from the Mercantile Marine; there is an increase of 350 engine-room artificers, 2,450 stokers, and 500 marines. As far as I can make out, 500 are boys who have been entered, making the number really 5,200. I question the policy of the increase of stokers, as the duties of stokers and firemen are the same in the Mercantile Marine as in men-of-war, and we can obtain men when we want them for this duty. It is otherwise with trained men. Whilst I agree with the proposals relating to manning, I wish to make a suggestion. In the past, when officers and men were more than sufficient to man sea-going ships, a number of secondary and subsidiary duties were put upon the men in the Navy, including

the surveying and trooping service. I have always felt that, as officers and men receive more scientific training, it is a mistake to use them for the every-day purposes where less trained labour would answer every demand. It seems to me to do so is much the same as using razors to chop blocks with. I deprecate the mode in which it is proposed to augment the number of stokers. I do not believe there is any necessity to make the newcomers long-service men. To do that would be to create an additional expense, when stokers, whose work is the same on any steamships, can be obtained easily from the Mercantile Marine. I am strongly of opinion that it would be for the advantage of the Public Service if a change were made in the present arrangements by which troops are now conveyed to and from India. The Indian troop service is now composed of old troopers. These old ships will soon, however, cease to exist, and I am strongly in favour of the proposal that trooping and transport should be carried out in future not by Government ships, but by contracts with private companies. In time of war these troopers would at once have to be laid aside, and every officer and man engaged on them now would have to be used elsewhere. As that is what must happen on the outbreak of a war, I cannot but think it would be a wise policy to get the transports which would then have to be called into requisition into something like working order during times of peace. I believe there are some 60 lieutenants locked up in the surveying service. I would not dissociate the surveying service from the Navy, but I think a good deal of that work could be done by hired vessels, leaving a considerable number of officers available to man our vessels. I am glad to hear that a Committee has been appointed to consider the question of officers under the proposed new arrangements. With regard to the subject of increased pay, which is from time to time brought forward for non-commissioned officers and men, I have always maintained, whether I am at the time in or out of Office, that if the men expect more money in the future the conditions of the old *régime* must be very carefully gone into. I regard with great satisfaction the action taken by the Government with a view of extending the scope of the annual mobilisation, and I am glad to see that the system is steadily

developing and increasing in favour with the men. I believe that the change in the barrack system is also working good. Before I say a few words on the Ship-building Vote, I must notice the very able speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast (Sir Edward Harland) with reference to the Admiralty business now before the House. I could not help feeling that the opinion of none of us can stand on equal terms with that of a man who has had so many years of daily practical knowledge of ship-building, when a question has to be faced from a purely practical point of view. But while I most fully appreciate the value of the hon. Member's remarks as to what should in future be done in the way of lengthening our war vessels and altering their coaling capacity, I would very humbly suggest that the experience gained in the building of merchant ships alone cannot always be applied to the building and equipment of men-of-war. In building the latter there is one thing above all to be considered—namely, where and how to place the guns. So difficult a question has this always proved that I feel I may say that those who have tried the building of both kinds of ships have come to the conclusion that to build a merchant vessel is but child's play to the difficulties experienced in building properly a fully-equipped man-of-war. A battleship is a fighting machine, and, therefore, many things in her design must be subordinated to the training of her guns and the storing of the ammunition for them. I would make one suggestion, and it is this: that the hon. Member for Cardiff, who has achieved such success in the designing of vessels to cross the Atlantic, should try his hand on a cruiser, and that he should take all the responsibility for her sea-going qualities.

An hon. MEMBER : Battleships ?

LORD G. HAMILTON : I am not so sure about the hon. Member's battleships, and therefore I would give him a cruiser first. If he could attain success with that he would have had the satisfaction of proving his theories, and the Constructive Department of the Admiralty are only too glad to welcome outside suggestions when they can do so with reasonable security. The confidence that is now placed in the Designing Department of the Admiralty is a contrast to

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the lack of confidence formerly exhibited, and the change may, I think, be taken as the measure of the gratitude due to Mr. White for his services during the past 13 years. If the Committee assent to the proposals for increased expenditure we ought to have a guarantee that the money voted will be applied to the purposes for which it was asked. Great objection was taken by Members of the Government to the procedure under the Naval Defence Act by which money, when voted to particular ships, was under the necessity of being devoted to those ships alone, and could not be devoted to any other purpose. The financial year, which would close on April 1, was the first in which the two systems had been in operation—the new system inaugurated by the Act and the old system. The two systems having now been in operation side by side, I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to follow the results of an investigation which I have made. The amount of money voted under the Naval Defence Act for new construction was £1,381,000, and every penny of that has been devoted to the purpose for which it was asked. All the rest of the money came under the old system. It provided for the commencement of four large ships and the building of a number of smaller ships and torpedo-catchers. There was a unanimous opinion that we should push on the building of big ships, because we were most deficient in them. For that purpose the Board of Admiralty took £375,000, and the sum they had spent at the close of the present financial year was £143,000. There may be plausible reasons given for the expenditure having been kept down—for the difference between the actual and the estimated expenditure—but as the ships were included in the Programme of the preceding year, there does not seem to be any valid excuse for the difference between the sum spent and the sum voted. The Admiralty also proposed last year to build 14 torpedo-catchers, experimental vessels. They were to be provided with tubular boilers, on a new principle; and, as we are only in the infancy of that experiment, I protest against the unwise step of so many being built until we have gained experience which may suggest improvements. Though the House was in continuous Session, there was no intimation of any

change until December, when the Financial Secretary, in a tone of triumph, informed the House that instead of 14 the Admiralty had ordered 36 torpedo-boats, costing £34,000 each, thereby incurring an additional outlay of £800,000 without Parliamentary authority. Now, Sir, I own to being very much surprised at this occurring with the right hon. Gentleman as Financial Secretary, because he was so very severe on all our Departments when he was Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. What is the consequence? The consequence is that a liability of £800,000 is carried forward to this year. If this unauthorised order for 22 torpedo-ships had not been given, that £800,000 would have been available for big ships, and four or five of them might have been commenced in private yards. I object to this irregularity, from a Parliamentary as well as from a naval point of view. It is a mistake to order at once such a large number of torpedo-boats, which require constant care and attention, especially when the engine-room artificer complement is so short, and when there will be a difficulty in obtaining basin accommodation for the vessels that will be completed this year under the Naval Defence Act. From the Parliamentary point of view I ask what guarantee have we, if we are not put in possession of the whole scheme, that the same transaction may not take place in the future on a larger scale? I suppose the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty will say that when I was in Office I did the same thing. Even if I did, that would not be a justification, but I did not. What I did was entirely different. I will tell the Committee what occurred. The late Government had trouble with certain boilers which leaked badly, and we were reluctantly compelled to put in the Suspense Account £60,000 or £70,000 for the purpose of reboiling those vessels, if certain experiments failed. But the experiments succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations, and that sum was not appropriated under the Repairs Act, but we asked the Treasury to be allowed to devote the money to building certain small vessels. But what has the right hon. Gentleman done? I quite agree that there must be a latitude given to First Lords of the Admiralty, so that they may make provision for unforeseen expenditure out of savings, but there is

one Vote to which the power of diversion ought not to apply, and that is the Vote for new construction. My complaint is, that not only have the Admiralty run up unauthorised liabilities with regard to small boats, but also with regard to big vessels. It is an axiom of naval finance that no new ironclad is to be constructed until the House of Commons has an opportunity of assenting to the commencement of the vessel, but during the past year the Government have, without authority, entered upon the construction of big vessels which in the aggregate will cost £2,400,000. I therefore congratulate the right hon. Gentleman, as the late Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, on having beaten the record of financial irregularity in running up this enormous bill without authority. The right hon. Gentleman referred to a possible change in the Government. If that change takes place, and the right hon. Gentleman resumes his functions as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, we shall watch with interest the manner in which he will pronounce judgment himself for this irregularity. If Parliament is to have control over expenditure, such transactions ought not to take place. I hope we will have an assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that nothing of the kind shall occur again. There is no Service which is more liable to fads than the Naval Service. At one time it is a torpedo, at another time a 100-ton gun, and at another a torpedo catcher. All these things are good; but do not let the idea run away with you. I have always believed that the danger of torpedoes in warfare has been over-estimated, and the more I see and read the more am I confirmed in that impression. These 42 vessels to which I have referred are of no use whatever for offensive purposes, and their construction only shows how a certain idea carries away distinguished naval officers. The expenditure of £4,500,000, which the right hon. Gentleman proposes, is a good round sum. It is not quite equal to what France and Russia are spending at the present moment, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer may fairly take credit for the greater economy of our method of construction. The idea is that our Navy is to be equal to those of any two Powers, and the two strongest Naval Powers are

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France and Russia. England has now 22 first-class battleships building and in commission. With the additional seven ships that are to be constructed the number will be raised to 29. France and Russia have already 28 first-class battleships. I therefore imagine that the number "seven" was fixed upon in order to give England an apparent advantage of one over the battleships of these two nations. But the bulk of the vessels of these Powers in course of construction are, however, much advanced, and will, I fear, be completed before our seven additional ships can be finished. France and Russia will, therefore, soon be ahead of us. In second-class battleships there is no semblance of equality between ourselves and France and Russia, for we have only 12 such ships, whilst the two Powers named have 21. In second and third-class cruisers we are superior, and we have a certain superiority in first-class cruisers. What we want are big vessels; and, that being the case, instead of building six second-class cruisers, it would be wiser to build four of the first-class, which are vessels that can take part in any great naval engagement. I wish to say, in conclusion, speaking for myself and for a large majority of those who act with me, that we desire to co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in increasing the strength of the Navy; but when the right hon. Gentleman concluded by stating that he had placed his scheme on record, I must point out that that is exactly what he has not done. I hope, therefore, that the Government will consider the advisability, in spite of what they have said on platforms, of taking the House of Commons into their confidence, and telling it what they really propose to do. If they will only do that, and give some assurance that what I have complained of shall not occur again, they will receive every assistance from us in bringing to a successful issue any scheme for the strengthening of the Navy in the interest of the Empire at large.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, he was by no means satisfied with the expressions used by the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty respecting the engine-room artificers. In connection with that portion of the scheme which provided for a large number of stokers, the right hon. Gentleman used the singu-

lar expression, "the stokers are qualified as mechanics." Now, the only men who were in any sense qualified as mechanics were the artificers. These men had to serve a seven years' apprenticeship to fully qualify themselves as practical engineers, and then they had to pass a test examination as to fitness; and yet, after doing all that, they could never be promoted from the position in which they found themselves on the first day of their entry into the Navy. Their grievance was that they could never be promoted, and that though they entered the Service as nominal petty officers, they had not the status, pay, accommodation, or authority of petty officers. In all other branches of the Service avenues of promotion were provided. In the Army a drummer-boy could become a non-commissioned officer. These men, after all, were the really qualified practical engineers of the Navy. He had nothing whatever to say of the so-called engineers—so-called, he meant, by the Regulations; but he did say that whatever their qualifications might be they had not the special qualities which the engine-room men had. Engine-room artificers were selected for service in torpedo-boats. They would not select even engineer officers for that onerous post, and yet, with the exception of a little extra pay while doing such duty, engine-room artificers went back to the same rating as before without any chance whatever of promotion. As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Liverpool had said, the ships of the Navy would have to depend, not on the men on deck, not on the first-class officers, but upon the men beneath, who were in the engine-room. He therefore asked the Financial Secretary, and through him the First Lord, to consider the position of these men. They asked for nothing unreasonable. They did not ask to be relieved of their onerous duties. They did not ask to be made gentlemen on board the ships; but they asked that they should have the chance of promotion like every other class in the Service, and that they should have accommodation suitable to the positions they occupied. The right hon. Gentleman talked about the stokers being qualified as mechanics. What did he mean by that phrase? The engine-room artificers were the only qualified mechanics. If the stokers were put into

the engine-room as mechanics with the artificers, the Navy would find itself at once, so far as the Regulations would permit, absolutely without the assistance of the very class of men it most required—[*A laugh*—because the artificers would never allow their places to be taken by untrained and unskilled men, when they themselves had spent a long apprenticeship. The hon. and gallant Member for Eastbourne laughed. He would tell the hon. and gallant Gentleman that the workmen had done so before, and would do it again. He therefore appealed to the Financial Secretary, in the interest of the welfare of the Navy, to take the matter into consideration. It would have to be dealt with sooner or later. He hoped the Conference suggested would take place at an early date, and that the recommendations of the men would be attended to by the Admiralty.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, the hon. Member for Bethnal Green had said there would be a mutiny in the Service if the demands of a certain section were not settled. He did not think the hon. Member meant that, and he would pass the expression by as a figure of speech. He did not wish it for a moment to be thought that he entertained ungenerous feelings towards the engine-room artificers; but he should say that he thought this case was greatly exaggerated, and that the 15,000 stokers who would be required under this Naval Programme deserved even more consideration. The leading stokers were mechanics. ["No, no!"]

MR. W. ALLAN: I have been in the Navy myself, and I never knew a fireman to lift a hammer in the repairing room.

ADMIRAL FIELD said, he was sorry for having ruffled the hon. Gentleman; but he was right in saying that the leading stokers were looked upon as mechanics; that they worked under the engineers, and would continue to do so till the end of time. There should be no jealousy of this kind between branches of the Service. The sympathies of hon. Gentlemen opposite were with their pets the engine-room artificers, but he thought the stokers were not unworthy of consideration. The hon. Member for Gateshead had called them firemen. They were more valuable than firemen, for they were taught what the engine-room

artificers were not taught—how to fight. He did not want to be thought ungenerous towards the engine-room artificers. Let them get what they could, but let their demands be first carefully considered by the Admiralty. Passing to the general scheme, he should first offer his humble compliments to the right hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary for the manner in which he had presented his statement to the House. He was glad that the noble Lord had struck the right keynote by promising the Government all the assistance the Opposition could give them in the discharge of this great duty. This should not be a Party question. It was a question of the greatest national importance, and it ought to be handled in a fitting manner by both sides of the House. He did not share the objections of the noble Lord to the action of the Admiralty in ordering these torpedo-catchers without the authority of Parliament. He rejoiced that they had had the courage to order them without that authority. [*Dissent.*] Well, he was speaking as a naval officer and not as a politician, and he did not care “tuppence” about the authority of Parliament having been obtained or not.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : We had the authority of the Treasury for spending the money.

ADMIRAL FIELD said, it was enough that the Treasury had assented. He was afraid that the noble Lord had been keeping bad company when he found him wanting to abolish the Imperial troopships.

LORD G. HAMILTON : The Indian troopships.

ADMIRAL FIELD : That was not his view on a former occasion.

LORD G. HAMILTON : Yes.

ADMIRAL FIELD did not understand so. He was himself strongly opposed to the giving up of these troopships. The matter had been fully inquired into, and the result had been that it was found that the troopships had done splendid service, and had paid for their cost over and over again ; and not only that, but they had been an admirable school for officers and men, and the only efficient school that we had. Consequently, he did not think that the noble Lord really represented the naval view of the subject. He thought it would be an admirable plan if we adopted the French custom and carried our own troops in our

own transports. They would then have the Naval Reserve men trained in men-of-war vessels instead of being carried about in all sorts of vessels. [“Agreed !”] Well, he thought he was entitled to the same consideration as hon. Members for the dockyard towns. He thought the French were at least as wise as we were, and if they thought it desirable to carry their troops in their own troopships it was a very curious thing that we should be told that we ought to abolish our troopships. Then the noble Lord wanted them to give up the Survey Service. For his part, he wanted to increase it. Their complaint was that they had not enough of the Surveying Service, and that there were not enough surveying officers. He hoped the Government would not assent to any change in the way of decreasing the efficiency of that Service. If we were so poor that we could not have enough men and money to keep our Fleet going, then God help us ! He should prefer that there were more men in the Marines. He rejoiced that the Admiralty were going to increase the leading stoker class, but it was more important to increase the seamen class. He was amazed to see that only 500 Marines were put down as increase. They were the cheapest force that could be devised under the Crown. They were cheapest as regarded pay and provisions, and were excellent men in regard to discipline, and valuable generally to the Fleet. He hoped the Secretary to the Admiralty would consider this point again as to the inferior stoker class of men, and he should suggest that they knocked off, say, 1,000 of the proposed increase, and substitute a similar number of seamen. The Admiralty thoroughly understood the needs of the situation both as to works and ships, and *personnel*, and armaments and docks, but the Government were not able to put forward a complete scheme for their acceptance. If they did not choose to put forward a complete scheme, of course they were masters of the situation. He regretted that they were the masters of the situation. He noticed they had put down seven battleships and six cruisers to be built, but he did not understand why the cruisers were to belong to the second class ; all the information they had was in favour of vessels of the *Blenheim* and *Blake* class. But the Government were masters

of the situation, and would do as they liked, and, no doubt, they would go on doing as they liked; but, at all events, he hoped they would do what they could to meet the ideas that he had indicated. They were promised seven battleships and six cruisers. Only five had been laid down, and two stood over for two years. If the Government was satisfied that we were weak in battleships, why should not all of them have been laid down at the same time? If five of the ships were to be advanced rapidly, why not the whole seven of them? Allusion had been made to the lieutenants' class. The lieutenants' class was much below what was required by the circumstances of the present time? That might not be the view of hon. Members opposite, but he had endeavoured to gather the opinion of lieutenants in the Service, and that was their opinion; and they felt that when they were called upon to command important vessels, it was a great hardship that they should not have the substantive rank of commander. The rank of commander was an ambition desired by everybody in the Service, and he thought it was worthy the serious consideration of the Admiralty whether officers called upon to command vessels of an important class should not have the substantive rank of commander, although the seniors might not be promoted to the rank of captain. He thought it would do a great deal of good if they promoted 100 lieutenants to the rank of commander. The right hon. Gentleman had said that, with regard to the engineer class, the Admiralty were ready to hear their case. He, however, would rather have a Committee to consider the case instead of individuals, and he was only sorry that the Admiralty did not know more about the subject.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said, the most remarkable thing about the proposals of the Government was that they only proposed to spend £1,360,000 out of the total of £8,000,000 which their complete programme would cost. No reason could be given by the Government for failing to put their complete programme, which should be a five years' programme, in its entirety before the country, except for the fact that they committed themselves to attacks upon the late Government when they were carrying their five years' programme out. Of course, they

welcomed any effort on the part of the present Government to bring the Navy up to its proper strength, and they would support them in all that they could do in that direction. At the same time, they could not help feeling that the programme was begun much later than it ought to have been begun. Then the Government had practically wasted 20 months of precious time, and now they put forward a new programme of seven battleships and six cruisers, but were only proposing to spend one-sixth of the whole sum involved. He wanted to say one word in regard to a work of great importance referred to in the First Lord's statement—he meant the construction of a naval dock at Gibraltar. When the late Government went out of Office two years ago they put a sum of £2,000 into the Estimates for preliminary inquiries and examinations, and now the Government came forward with a proposal to spend several thousand pounds on the dock. He ventured to say, although he made no claim to be an expert in the matter, but as one who had studied it thoroughly, that of all the necessities of the Naval Service the building of this dock at Gibraltar was the greatest. He would rather see the dock at Gibraltar undertaken and finished even if it were necessary to give up the construction of one of the battleships. What was the centre of our naval power? It was at present the Mediterranean. If we were forced into a war with France the Mediterranean Fleet would be compelled to retire to Gibraltar for reinforcements, and it was probable that the great naval battles of the future would be fought in waters close to Gibraltar. Was it creditable that we had not the means of receiving and repairing a single battleship, or cruiser, or torpedo catcher at that great naval centre, which ought to be one of the greatest naval centres and dockyards in the world? It would be necessary, as things stood at present, to send a disabled warship 1,000 miles—to Portsmouth or Plymouth—against an enemy in possession of innumerable torpedo-boats. Seven thousand vessels stopped at Gibraltar in 1889, and the amount of commerce passing through the Mediterranean in a year was enormous. One of the first necessities of the Navy, he urged, was the construction of a suitable dock at Gibraltar. The work had been put off year after year; and now that the

Government had undertaken it at last, they only put £1,000 on the Estimates, leaving £366,000 for construction of the dock alone to be spent in future years. He hoped the Government would consider this question, and see if it was not possible to advance the work more rapidly. It was an undertaking the necessity for which was recognised by the whole nation, and he did not think the money could be better spent.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said that before the Vote was taken he must endeavour to get an answer from the Admiralty upon a matter of great interest to his constituency. The Admiralty engaged in dredging operations, and the stuff the dredgers got up, in defiance of remonstrances made, was thrown into the fishing grounds of his constituents, or, at all events, into waters which were under the purview of the Kent and Essex Fishery Committee. In order to get an answer from the Civil Lord of the Admiralty he should move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

THE CHAIRMAN: That would be out of Order.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): I can assure the hon. Member that this work is about to be stopped. I will give the hon. Gentleman to-morrow particulars of the new scheme of dredging, which I am sure will obviate the objection raised.

MAJOR RASCH: May I mention that I was present at the last meeting of the Kent and Essex Fishery Committee, and know what is the proposal made. I accept the proposal in the sense that half a loaf is better than no bread, but I suggest that the best plan is to throw the refuse into the water from between the Mouse Light and the Mouse Sand—if the hon. Gentleman knows where that is. In that case I shall not want to trouble him again.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, he could not go farther than to promise to consider the suggestion.

Vote agreed to.

2. £3,918,500, Wages, &c., of Officers, Seamen, Boys, Coast Guard, and Marines, agreed to.

Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett

ARMY EXCESSES, 1892-3.

3. £100, Army (Ordnance Factories) Excess, 1892-3.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I would venture to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can give us any idea when he will proceed with the Navy Estimates?

*SIR W. HARCOURT: The Government acknowledge the consideration shown by the Opposition in the transaction of Business in difficult circumstances before the close of the financial year. I hope that during April time will be found for the full and fair discussion of the Naval Estimates which has been promised.

Vote agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE EXCESSES, 1892-3.

4. £685 14s., Civil Service Excesses, 1892-3.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS (HOUSE OF COMMONS).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed to control the arrangements for the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms, in the department of the Serjeant-at-Arms attending this House."—(Mr. T. E. Ellis.)

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he had obtained a promise that this proposal should not be taken except at a reasonable hour, when there would be an opportunity of debating it. Acting upon that promise a number of Members who were interested had gone away. He hoped, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would allow the proposal to be put off. Otherwise, he thought there would be an impression that the right hon. Gentleman had not acted fairly.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he certainly had every desire to act fairly. The hour was comparatively early, and if the Committee were not appointed supplies might literally be cut off.

MR. CRÉMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said that, as one of the Members of the Committee, he should have been glad if the proposal could have been postponed. He was not anxious for any unnecessary delay, but it was idle to dis-

guise the fact that some very unpleasant expressions had been used in regard to the Committee. He had invited some of those who had used such expressions to make their complaints in the House, so that the Members of the Committee could answer them. As the Members who complained had gone away, they could not now express their views, and he therefore hoped that the Motion would be postponed.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that acting upon what he thought was an understanding with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had told Members who were interested in the question that they might go away as far as he was concerned. He should not attempt to discuss the question at that late hour.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Agg-Gardner, Lord Burghley, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Fellowes, General Goldsworthy, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Leveson-Gower, Mr. Loder, Mr. McArthur, Mr. P. J. Power, Mr. Alfred Thomas, and Dr. Tanner.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis*.)

THE SITTING ON THURSDAY.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think it will be for the convenience of Members who may desire to leave London at a reasonable hour on Thursday that the House should meet earlier than usual on that day. I will therefore put down a notice that on Thursday the House shall meet at 2 o'clock. There will, I think, only be formal business, so that very soon after that hour Members will be released.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Francis Powell, Bill to make more effectual provision for Prevention of the Pollution of Rivers and Streams, ordered to be brought in by Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Sir John Dorington, Mr. Barran, Sir Henry Howorth, and Dr. Farquharson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 95.]

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Howell, Bill to amend "The Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893," in so far as it relates to the Island of Jersey, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Howell, Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Bartley, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, and Mr. Charles Fenwick.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 96.]

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Renshaw, Bill to provide for the establishment of a County Councils Association in Scotland and to enable County Councils to contribute to the expenses of the Association, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Renshaw, Captain Hope, Captain Sinclair, Mr. Parker Smith, Sir John Kinloch, Mr. Maxwell, and Dr. Farquharson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 97.]

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACTS (1887 AND 1891) AMENDMENT (CUTLERY) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Coleridge, Bill to amend the Merchandise Marks Acts, 1887 and 1891, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Henry J. Wilson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 98.]

GROUND GAME ACT (1880) EXTENSION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lambert, Bill to extend the provisions of "The Ground Game Act, 1880," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lambert, Earl Compton, Mr. Channing, Mr. Billson, Mr. John H. Roberts, and Mr. Luttrell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 99.]

FOREIGN MEAT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lambert, Bill for the identification of Foreign Meat, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lambert, Mr. Yerburch, Dr. Farquharson, Sir John Kennaway, and Mr. Billson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 100.]

SPORT REGULATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. C. Morton, Bill to prohibit the hunting, coursing, and shooting of animals kept in confinement, ordered to be brought in by Mr. A. C. Morton, Mr. Barran, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Diamond, General Goldsworthy, Major Jones, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. E. J. C. Morton, Mr. Schwann, and Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 101.]

RETURN TICKETS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. C. Morton, Bill to enable passengers in railway trains and on steamboats, &c., to make use of Return Tickets at any time after the date of issue, ordered to be brought in by Mr. A. C. Morton, Mr. Bousfield, Mr. John Burns, Dr. Clark, Sir John Leng, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Mr. Picton, Mr. Provand, Sir Albert Rollit, and Dr. Tanner.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 102.]

CROFTERS HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to amend "The Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," ordered to be brought in by Dr. Clark, Mr.

Angus, and Lord, Mr. Wm. De Winton, and Sir David Matheson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 101.]

WOMEN'S FRANCHISE BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to abolish the Existing Franchise of Women, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Clark, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Charles Diller, Mr. James McCarty, Mr. J. H. Wilson, Sir Robert Jones, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir William Watson, and Mr. John Wilson [Dunelm].

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 102.]

TENANT FARMERS SPORTING RIGHTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Latham, Bill to give to tenants of land the sporting rights therein ordered to be brought in by Mr. Latham, Mr. Benson, Mr. Burnie, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Lorne, Mr. Halley Stewart, and Sir William Watson-Burn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 103.]

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Donald Crawford, Bill to make provision with respect to the Tenure of the Houses of Workmen in certain circumstances, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. John Wilson, Mr. John Wilson, and Mr. Phillips.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 104.]

IRISH EDUCATION ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Field, Bill to amend "The Irish Education Act, 1892," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Field, Dr. Kenny, Mr. John Redmond, and Mr. Clancy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 105.]

SOLICITORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Field, Bill to amend the Law for regulating the admission of Law Clerks into the profession of Solicitors in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Field and Dr. Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 106.]

CLUBS REGISTRATION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Field, Bill for the Registration and Regulation of Clubs in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Field and Dr. Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 107.]

OUTDOOR PROVIDENT RELIEF BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bartley, Bill to amend the Law relating to Outdoor Relief in sickness and widowhood to the provident poor, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bartley, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, and General Goldsworthy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 110.]

OCCUPYING TENANTS' ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bartley, Bill to enable Occupying Tenants of Houses and Places of

Business to purchase the freehold of their holdings, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bartley, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, and General Goldsworthy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 111.]

SOLICITORS' EXAMINATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Albert Rollit, Bill to amend the provisions of "The Solicitors Act, 1871," relating to the examination of persons applying to be admitted Solicitors of the Supreme Court in England, ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Parks, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Clancy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 112.]

KINGSTON-UPON-HULL (COURT OF RECORD) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Albert Rollit, Bill to better define the jurisdiction and to improve the procedure of the Court of Record in the town and county of the city of Kingston-upon-Hull, ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Charles Wilson, Sir Seamus King, Mr. Thomas Stothell, Commander General, and Mr. Wilson-Todd.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 113.]

GROCEERS' CERTIFICATES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to abolish the Grocers' Certificates in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. John Wilson, Mr. Clancy, and Mr. Phillips.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 114.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Forenoon.)

1. Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1893, the sum of £180,148 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1893, the sum of £2,055,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow. Committee to sit again To-morrow.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

TRADE REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.)

Copy presented,—of Reports on Subjects of General and Commercial Interest, No. 325 (Germany) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday 12th March 1853

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table announced the names of the Members who had been elected to the Committee of the House of Commons on the subject of the proposed Bill for the amendment of the law relating to the

names of Days and Months, presented to the House, and after the names had been called, the House adjourned till the following day.

Resolved, That the House do

That the House do now adjourn at 1 o'clock of the day. — The Chancellor of the Exchequer.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

In the Committee.

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Class I.

Resolved, That the House do

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Class III.

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Resolved, That the House do

Ireland :—	
Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	£ 12,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments	20,000
Land Commission	11,000
County Court Officers, &c.	18,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police, &c.	20,000
Constabulary	280,000
Prisons, Ireland	20,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	30,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	1,500

CLASS IV.

United Kingdom and England :—	
Public Education, England and Wales	1,160,000
Science and Art Department, United Kingdom	116,000
British Museum	27,000
National Gallery	3,000
National Portrait Gallery	500
Scientific Investigations, &c., United Kingdom	7,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	14,000
London University	5

Scotland :—	
Public Education	220,000
National Gallery	400

Ireland :—	
Public Education	250,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners	250
National Gallery	300
Queen's Colleges	500

CLASS V.

Diplomatic and Consular Services	110,000
Slave Trade Services	1,500
Colonial Services, including South Africa	25,000
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies, &c.	17,500

CLASS VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	130,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c.	3,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiency	—
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain	500
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland	70,000
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland	4,000

CLASS VII.

Temporary Commissions	9,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	500
Diseases of Animals	10,000
Highlands and Islands of Scotland	5,000
Repayments to the Local Loans Fund	—
Repayments to the Civil Contingencies Fund	—
Hobart (Tasmania) Exhibition, 1894-5	—

Total for Civil Services	£3,529,768
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REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Customs	50,000
Inland Revenue	100,000
Post Office	100,000
Post Office Packet Service	20,000
Post Office Telegrams	400,000

Total for Revenue Departments	£670,000
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Grand Total	£4,199,768
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DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he regretted to see that the Secretary for Scotland was not in his place, because he desired to make some remarks that he should like the right hon. Gentleman to hear. The matters he wanted to speak about had reference to financial questions and to questions of policy. His remarks would be directed to the Deer Forest Commission. The Commission got into a bad condition last year, and a moiety of the members retired. He believed these members had now come back. The trouble was a financial one. So far as his information went, a job was perpetrated. Generally, a job was perpetrated on behalf of one's friends, but upon this occasion it had been perpetrated on behalf of the enemy. When the Commission was established it was composed of gentlemen who were willing to give their time free. When they were appointed they appointed a surveyor to assist them upon fair and moderate terms—two guineas a day. This gentleman did his work for some time. By-and-bye one of the members of the Commission was asked to act as surveyor, not at two guineas a day, but at the rate of five guineas a day. And this was voted to him by his own vote, and he was now being paid, and if they got a return from the Secretary for Scotland as to the amount of money paid for the Commission they would probably find that this one individual had got more money than all the rest of the Commission put together. He did not intend, he might say here, to move any reduction of the Vote. The Commission was divided into two sections. So far as the landlords on the Commission were concerned, he thought they had shown a great deal of wisdom and acted with fairness, but this gentleman who represented the landlords was more a landlord than all the landlords there. He had attended the Commission, and he had acted as the paid advo-

cate of his class. When the question came up he should move the reduction of the Vote by the sums paid to him on the ground, first, that it was unnecessary; and, secondly, that the Commission were paying this man by their own votes for work which he did before as a member of the Commission without salary. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury would see that these amounts were paid back into the Treasury. A more important point was the question of the mode in which the Commission was doing its work. He understood the Commission was appointed for the purpose of seeing whether there was any arable land in the Highlands available for the crofters. It was 14 months since they were appointed, and they had had no information of what they had done. He had seen reports of their meetings in the newspapers, but they had no official Report of what they had done. He wanted to know how long it was to go on. He would not be a party to the payment of another penny towards continuing the Commission. The point in dispute was whether there was arable land in the Highlands for the crofters. That was a question which could be very easily settled. If they were going to modify the Crofters Act they could very easily modify the question at once, and they could either give to the Crofters Commission or to the Sheriffs the power of giving out the land if it was there. As to the Crofters Commission, he regretted that things were going on on the same lines, and hoped that with a new Government in power they would have a change. They had a Commission composed of a Sheriff, a factor, and a farmer. These were men in whom they could not have much confidence. As a matter of fact, that same class of men were being appointed as assessors. There was no representative at all of the crofter class. The people, he repeated, had no confidence in this class of persons. There were plenty of other men among the crofters who could represent them. There was another point he wished to raise—the salary of the Under Secretary for Scotland. He went down to the Welsh Land Commission to give evidence regarding the working of the Crofters Act. His evidence manifested great ignorance. Ignorance alone might be

excused. But it was worse than that. He misrepresented the facts, and traduced and maligned the crofter people. That was one of the evils which was suffered through the sending of these well-paid aristocrats all over the country. When the Vote came up he thought he would be able to convict this gentleman of ignorance and arrogance utterly unworthy of a public servant, and unless they had some excuse better than his letters he should do what he could to take away his salary from him as being unworthy of the position he held.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyllshire) said, he did not mean to travel over so large a ground as his hon. Friend, but his hon. Friend suggested there should be some simpler and more rapid mode of ascertaining what land in the Highlands was available for the extension of crofters' holdings. His hon. Friend did not suggest how it was to be discovered or to what extent land was so available except by travelling over the country for the purpose. As to the methods of the Commission, he was neither going to censure them nor to express approval; but a Commission was necessary, because for years past they who had advocated the rights of these people had maintained there was sufficient land available if they could get at it, and this Commission was appointed to see whether that allegation was true or not, and he regretted that the Commission had not seen its way to make an Interim Report, but at the same time he must say they could scarcely expect the Government to bring in a Bill to deal with the Report of a Commission whose work was not half finished. He understood, however, the Government were prepared to support a Bill to amend the existing Crofters Act, to include leaseholders and other urgent matters, but he did not see that they could expect the Government to bring in a Bill and to legislate for the disposal of available land in the Highlands until the whole amount of that land was ascertained, and that could not be done until the Commission finished its work. He hoped it would finish its work in a short time. He was aware there was a certain amount of friction in connection with the surveyor, but that had been more or less satisfactorily arranged. As to the amount of money, it was very small as

compared with the magnitude of the subject. It was very clear that a job had been perpetrated, he would not say by what part, but by a part of the Commission, to secure a sum that was not necessary for the work, because they had a man appointed regularly to do it. But that was immaterial. What they wanted to deal with was the large question to settle whether there was no land in the Highlands for the Highland people. He had never himself run, what he might call, a-muck at the deer forests; he was quite content the deer should be left when the land was not fit for any other purpose; but what they contended, and were now proving by the action of the Commission, was that a very large area of the land occupied by the deer might be better occupied as arable or pasture land. While he sympathised with the object of his hon. Friend, he could not entirely agree with him in all the views he had expressed.

*DR. MACGREGOR said, he should defer the remarks he wished to make on the condition that he could speak on Vote 27.

THE CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. Member could do so.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he merely wished to ask a question. The Secretary to the Treasury was aware that he (Mr. Bowles) had moved for a Return of the pluralists, simply in the interests of the Public Service, and he proposed to call attention to the whole question. However, he was extremely anxious to save the time of the House, and not to be driven to call attention to each of these pluralists as the name came up in the Votes. There were 439 of them, and he did not wish to raise 439 discussions. Therefore, he would prefer to deal with them all at one time by way of a Resolution. Consequently, he wished to ask if the Government could see their way towards affording him facilities to deal with the whole of these pluralists at the one time?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) said, he believed the hon. Gentleman had put down a Notice of Motion on this subject on going into Committee of Supply. He hoped the hon. Member would have an opportunity of bringing the question forward in that way, which

would be preferable to dealing with the subject on many different Votes. If the hon. Member was unable to bring the matter forward on going into Committee of Supply, he would see what could be done.

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, the Committee would think, as two or three rather serious things had been said, that he should say a few words in reply to the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark). He was quite sure when his hon. Friend brought forward his rather vague questions definitely before the Committee, he would give him notice not that he had not a very good general knowledge of the matters about which he had spoken, but as some of his charges were very definite, not against himself but against certain individuals whom he was bound to defend, and with regard to whose proceedings he should be glad to have the exact facts and figures before him. His hon. Friend had treated the matter in a slight prefatory manner. He said a job had been perpetrated by the Deer Forest Commission, and a job on behalf of the enemies of the Government; that the Commission was divided into two sections, the landlord class and the friends and representatives of the crofters, and the paid advocate of the landlord class had voted himself five guineas a day, and that was a job perpetrated on behalf of the enemies of the Government. With regard to this Commission and the classes with whom the Commission dealt, the Government had neither friends nor enemies; their desire was to have all classes duly represented on the Commission in order that they might get a fair Report that might command, as far as possible, universal confidence. One gentleman, placed on that Commission, Mr. Gordon, was a very eminent land valuer and surveyor, and was placed there in order to give the Commission the benefit of his continuous services. It was not Mr. Gordon who voted this five guineas a day, but it was done by the Treasury before his appointment, on the understanding with him that he should have five guineas a day for his professional services in accordance with the very general Treasury Rule of which he (Sir G. Trevelyan) had already given the House a good number of instances. It was left to the

Commission to say on what days he should be paid this five guineas. In obedience to that the Commission passed a vote by a majority—it was not the business of the Government to inquire into how that majority was constituted—that Mr. Gordon should be paid on certain days, and at the same time, by a majority, they requested the Government to take the responsibility off their hands, and lay down in future for themselves on what days Mr. Gordon should be paid this five guineas. In both cases the Government accepted, as they were bound, the decision of the majority of the Commission. With regard to his past services, they paid Mr. Gordon for the days which were recommended; and with regard to his future services they laid down a rule, and he had been paid accordingly. The Commission had been appointed for the purpose of ascertaining what land there was in the Highlands available for cultivation by the crofters, and at the same time what land was fit for pasture by the crofters. The hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) said the great grievance was that they wanted more land. What land? This Commission had been appointed for finding that out. It would not take three or four years to make the inquiry; it had taken the working days of one year, and, as far as he knew, the crofting districts of Scotland would have been inspected in the course of the working days of another year, and very hard indeed these gentlemen worked in order to cover the great extent of country they had gone over. It had seriously affected the health of more than one of them, and he must say they deserved the gratitude of the House, and not its reprobation. As to the Interim Report, it was for the Commission to say whether they would make one, and it was absolutely impossible for a Government Department to dictate to a Royal Commission, and he was bound to say that in the reasons they gave for making a Report as a whole there was a very great deal with which the Government was satisfied. His hon. Friend referred to the evidence, which Sir Colin Moncrieff gave before the Welsh Land Commission. That Commission was appointed, he took it, for the purpose of ascertaining whether amendment would be made in the Welsh Land Laws, and therefore it was ex-

remely important to ascertain what effect the Crofters Act, and the great benefits it conferred on the Highlands, had produced on the prosperity and character of the crofting population. With regard to the evidence of the Under Secretary, he should say little or nothing, for the very good reason that the charge which his hon. Friend had made against him was of the most general nature. The hon. Member said the evidence showed ignorance and arrogance utterly unworthy of a public servant, and that he traduced and maligned the people of the Highlands. He (Sir G. Trevelyan) thought it would have been well if his hon. Friend had kept these strong words until he had quoted the passage in Sir Colin Moncrieff's evidence. He (Sir G. Trevelyan) was bound to say he had gone through that evidence, and he thought Sir Colin Moncrieff had given, as far as statistics were concerned, an extremely brief, and by no means unfavourable, account of the working of the Crofters Act. He could not even imagine on what passage in his evidence his hon. Friend could justify the expression "traduced and maligned the people," except some expressions let drop by Sir Colin Moncrieff with regard to the industry of the Highland people. On that point it was extremely important that evidence should be before the Welsh Commission and the public as to the effect that had been produced by the Crofters Act on the Highland people. He had evidence given him on high authority and in confidence, but evidence which the same high authority would be quite willing, he was sure, to give in public before the Welsh Commission. That evidence told him that the effect of the Crofters Act on the Highland people had been greatly to increase their industry, greatly to increase their self-reliance, and greatly to increase their self-respect. On that point he must bear witness that the poor homes in which in so many cases they often lived had now been superseded by excellent well-built houses. When once the magic of property came to be realised, the people were induced to spend labour and money on the improvement of their dwellings, and he was informed, likewise, when the Commission visited these farms, sugges-

tions had been made of better farming, which the crofters had most willingly taken up and carried forward with good results. It was extremely important that the Welsh Commission should have evidence on this point before it of a responsible character, and he had arranged that such evidence should be forthcoming. He had reason to believe they would be only too glad to hear evidence from Members of Parliament, and others, who were thoroughly conversant with the state of the Highlands, and in one case he knew that that evidence had been offered and accepted. But on the general question of Sir Colin Moncrieff's evidence, he was bound to say that the charges made in the newspapers and elsewhere had not been fair towards that public servant, who had taken great care to inform himself before he went to give evidence. He (Sir G. Trevelyan) admitted Sir Colin Moncrieff had not that personal acquaintance with the Highlands which would enable him to give a complete and authoritative statement on the subject, which would not need to be supplemented by others, as it would be supplemented; but the evidence was given in good faith, and when it was read *in extenso* it was of a very different nature from that compressed and, in some respects, adulterated, edition of it which got into the newspapers the next day. With regard to the Bill to amend the Crofters Act, the Government promised that this year they would do their best—that was to say, they would pass, if the House did not prevent them, a Bill to extend the advantages of the Crofters Act to leaseholding occupiers. That was a small promise, but it was an absolute one.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) said, he only wished to ask a question of the Secretary to the Treasury with regard to a Vote which he saw was of the same amount this year as it was last, although the House of Commons last year decided in favour of a reduction of £500. He did not presume the right hon. Gentleman, in face of the action taken by the House, was going to ask for the same amount for the House of Lords Officers as was asked last year. He knew that the right hon. Gentleman had been in communication with the Chairman of Committees of the House

of Lords, and, therefore, he was not going to press it to-day, as he did not think it a proper opportunity, and because some allies who supported him last time were not in their places to-day; still, he thought it was a matter on which they should have some information. Therefore, he would like to know how the right hon. Gentleman proposed to deal with the matter—whether he would suggest a Joint Committee of the two Houses or how the question was to be dealt with; but surely the House of Commons would not desire to pass the same Estimate this year as was passed last year.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT thought the hon. Member was quite right in raising the question, and he might tell him that a difficulty had arisen in regard to this matter. He had made a proposal to the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, Lord Morley, suggesting what he considered the best way out of the difficulty—namely, to have a Joint Committee of both Houses, who should consider the question of the salaries of the Clerks of both Houses. He had not yet had any definite reply, but the matter was under consideration. He was glad the hon. Member did not propose to carry the matter further to-day, and before they reached the Vote on the Estimates he hoped he should be able to make a communication to the House.

MR. J. G. LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) said, he wished to call attention to a matter of interest to agricultural and rural districts, and in this he hoped he would receive the support of Members for agricultural constituencies.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): On a point of Order, asked if the hon. Member was going to move a Resolution?

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know, but he is in possession of the Committee.

MR. J. G. LAWSON said, the matter he wished to raise was of very great importance.

DR. CLARK: Do you mean to move a Resolution?

MR. J. G. LAWSON: Yes.

DR. CLARK: That will stop all our discussion.

MR. J. G. LAWSON said, the time was so short that he was compelled to bring the matter forward, even if it prevented the other question being discussed. The question he had to raise had refer-

ence to the attitude taken up with regard to voluntary schools. At this moment, when it was most difficult to raise money in rural districts, great pressure was being brought to bear upon all voluntary schools throughout England to meet the requirements, which were of various descriptions; some of which were perhaps necessary, but others of which he considered were fads, if he might be allowed to use the expression. There were in the agricultural districts two things which the people had at heart: first, they liked their voluntary school system; and, in the second place, they hated rates. If this matter was to go on, and pressure was to be put on the managers of these schools, the voluntary schools must go down, and they would never be reared again, because if once the School Board system was established they could not go back to the voluntary schools, and the villagers would have a school rate which at present they were able to escape in so many places. It was said on a former occasion that was not the right opportunity for raising the question, that the proper occasion would be when the Vote for the salary of the Minister of Education came up. That Vote had now come on, and therefore this was distinctly their opportunity. The right hon. Gentleman had not been slow to meet any charges directed against him, and had always appeared most eager for the contest; but whenever the subject had been hitherto debated, it had been in the early hours of the morning, or at some time when the House was anxious to hurry on with other business.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): Allow me to make one remark. Last week this subject was under discussion—the exact question the hon. Member is now raising—and the Government made no request that it should be put off, or in any way postponed.

MR. J. G. LAWSON said, the point he desired to make was not the question of the voluntary system as against Board schools, but whether pressure should be put on the agricultural districts at this moment. He knew nothing about the urban districts, with which he was not acquainted; but, as far as the rural districts were concerned, he desired to continue his remarks. They had had

no opportunity of raising this particular point from the views of the agricultural Members, but there appeared, all through last Session, signs that trouble, anxiety, and indignation were growing throughout the rural districts, for week after week questions had been put by Members pointing out particular cases of hardship in their own divisions, and with so much smoke there must be some fire. The fact was, that it was well known to every Inspector of Schools in England that the right hon. Gentleman preferred the School Board system to the voluntary system.

MR. ACLAND: No, I never said so.

MR. J. G. LAWSON said, it was a matter of common notoriety.

MR. ACLAND: I deny it.

MR. J. G. LAWSON was very glad, was delighted, to have drawn that denial from the right hon. Gentleman. He hoped it would go forth to every Inspector in England that the right hon. Gentleman did not prefer the School Board to the voluntary system, and perhaps they would see that the Inspectors would change their tactics.

MR. ACLAND: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to allow me to interrupt him. If he makes an imputation of this sort he must give some foundation for it. He says the Inspectors, as servants of the Department, are well aware that I, as head of the Department, prefer the School Board to the voluntary system. That means that they must have some official knowledge of it. I must ask him to prove it, and I say it is not proved.

MR. J. G. LAWSON said, that he had listened to the right hon. Gentleman's speeches, and had drawn from them that, although he said quite truly that he endeavoured to hold the scales equally between the two systems, his own opinion was in favour of the School Board system. This was the view of the Inspectors, and it accounted for their increased assiduity and vigilance in making demands on the managers of the voluntary schools. If these demands were made in the large towns, where there were wealthy citizens able to meet them, perhaps no great harm would be done; but they were made in the rural districts, where the landlord was in a very embarrassed condition, the farmer was little better off than the labourers who worked for him, and the labourers had no money

to spare, however willing they might be to subscribe to the voluntary schools. The result was inevitable, unless they could persuade the right hon. Gentleman to stay his hand for the present. If Board schools were substituted for voluntary schools the country would lose subscriptions equal to £750,000. They would also lose the greater economy of voluntary schools, where children were educated for 6s. a head cheaper than in Board schools. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would throw out some hint that zeal in bringing about the introduction of the School Board rate into parishes which were now free from it was not the royal road to his favour. The rural schools were suffering at present from the utmost rigour of what, with all deference to the right hon. Gentleman, was called the active persecution of voluntary schools throughout the country. If only an intimation went forth that the right hon. Gentleman was not desirous that at the present most unfortunate moment that rigour should be not only not relaxed but increased, something would have been gained which would be valued in agricultural constituencies. He moved the reduction of Item 1, Class IV., by £500.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to a point of Order, Sir. If this Amendment is moved one-half of the Votes cannot be discussed or amended. The hon. Member, in moving it, is taking advantage of the Forms of the House to prevent discussion.

*THE CHAIRMAN: As there are seldom any notices of reductions on a Vote on Account this state of things always happens. It is in accordance with the Rules, and if the hon. Member chooses to move his Amendment I cannot help it.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I rise to Order, Sir. My hon. Friend stated just now that he wanted to deal with Class IV.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I have decided the point of Order. The hon. Member who referred to Class IV. did not move on that class.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
 "That the Item of £1,160,000 for Public Education in England and Wales, be reduced by £500."—(Mr. J. G. Lawson.)

Mr. J. G. Lawson

DR. CLARK: I now beg to move, Mr. Mellor, that you report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The Rule is perfectly clear, and I cannot put that Motion. If there was any doubt about the Rule I should do what I could to assist those Members who wish to discuss earlier parts of the Vote.

DR. CLARK: I move to report Progress. I say it is utterly impossible for us to do our duty if discussion upon four-fifths of the Votes before the Committee is to be ruled out of Order as it will be by the course now taken. We shall be unable to discuss the whole of Class I., Class II., in which there are 35 Votes, and Class III., which takes in almost everything. It will leave us with absolutely nothing to do.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not speaking to the Question before the Committee. The Question is that of the proposed reduction.

DR. CLARK: The Question is to report Progress.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot put that Question, as the Rule is quite clear.

DR. CLARK: I am moving a Motion, Sir, and I am within my rights in doing so.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already dealt with that. I cannot accept the Motion.

DR. CLARK: It is your function, Sir, to maintain Order. If—

THE CHAIRMAN: Under the Standing Order I must decline to put the hon. Member's Motion.

DR. CLARK: Sir, I have a right to move my Motion and make my speech. I demur to your right to decline the Motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. HANBURY (Preston): On the point of Order, Sir, I understand that it is within the competence of the Chairman to decline to put the Motion, but I would ask is it not within his competence to refuse to have the Motion made?

*THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly. If, as I have already said, the Rule were not clear I should do what I could to assist the hon. Member, because I think it is the hard rule, and I must abide by it.

DR. CLARK: I have risen to call attention to the inconvenience—

THE CHAIRMAN: That is clearly out of Order.

DR. CLARK : It is always a Member's right to move to report Progress.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) : I would call my hon. Friend's attention to the fact that he must submit to the decision of the Chairman. He cannot inform the Chairman, after a decision has been given, of what he thinks is the proper course. Clearly, if order is to be maintained in the House, he must submit to the Chairman's ruling. It is the duty of the Chairman to state to the Committee the course that must be taken under the circumstances that arise.

DR. CLARK : I was going to give my reasons for moving to report Progress, and when I was doing so the Chairman rose and said he had put the Motion. I do not know whether I have a right to give my reasons for moving to report Progress.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I understand that when the Chairman has given a ruling of this kind, which is within his discretion, that ruling cannot be argued upon. If we once began to dispute the rulings of the Chair we should get into a deplorable state of disorder.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) : I desire to ask, Mr. Mellor, whether I shall have an opportunity of making some observations regarding the statement made by the Secretary for Scotland?

THE CHAIRMAN : When the matter arises I will answer that question.

MR. A. C. MORTON : May I ask, Mr. Mellor, whether you can refuse to put the Motion for reduction, seeing that if you do so it will put us to such a disadvantage, bearing in mind that the hon. Gentleman informed you that he was going to move in Class IV.

THE CHAIRMAN : As I have already explained, I am bound by the Rule of the House. I have no power to alter it. As I have said, I would help the hon. Member if I could, but the hon. and learned Gentleman is perfectly within his right, and I am bound to administer the Rule as I find it. This has happened more than once on Votes on Account.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) : Is it not the fact, Mr. Mellor, that there is no point of Order at all, and that if a Member who wishes to

move a reduction on Class I. finds a Member who wishes to move on Vote 7 is in possession of the House, he cannot call upon him to give way unless he wishes to do so?

THE CHAIRMAN : That is so ; that is the Rule of the House. Owing to the fact that on a Vote on Account there is no list of Notices of Motion, any hon. Member who is called upon remains in possession unless he chooses to give way.

MR. A. C. MORTON : Then if we had Notices on the Paper you would call upon us in the order of those Notices?

THE CHAIRMAN : When hon. Gentlemen give Notice of Amendments the Chair calls upon them according to their Notices, but on a Vote on Account any hon. Member who is in possession of the Committee is entitled to move a reduction unless he gives way.

MR. A. C. MORTON : Then we could give notice on a Vote on Account?

THE CHAIRMAN : That has been done repeatedly.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : As it is very desirable that we should if possible get out of the difficulty, I would ask the hon. Member for Thirsk (Mr. J. G. Lawson) whether, if he were afterwards allowed to continue the discussion on the subject he has brought forward, he would be willing to withdraw his Motion for a reduction, so as to give Members an opportunity of discussing other matters.

THE CHAIRMAN : But I must call attention to the Rule. The withdrawal of a Motion on a Vote on Account does not help the matter. The question is whether the Amendment has been put from the Chair. My duty is to put from the Chair every Amendment moved, and, whether it is withdrawn or not, the putting it from the Chair has the same effect.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) wished to draw attention to the fact that on Thursday last a couple of hours were spent mainly in discussing the general question of the demands of the Education Department upon schools in all parts of the country, especially in relation to buildings. Some conversation then took place between the noble Lord the Member for Rochester (Viscount Cranborne) and himself, and it was

arranged that all serious cases in which there was any question of withholding the grant should be brought before him and that the facts should be published, so that everybody might know that the schools were in danger. The effect of this arrangement would be to bring to his own notice some of the cases which he would not otherwise know of. As he had already pointed out, he had no interest in the unequal treatment of schools in any part of the country. He did not, however, object to these discussions if they brought him the unusual distinction, such as he had received since last Thursday, of a letter from a rural dean, worded as follows :—

"I see that complaint is made on account of orders being given that every school should have a cloak-room. For doing this you are called a 'faddist.' I do not exactly know what that means, but if it has regard to cloak-rooms and sanitary arrangements, I suffer from the same complaint. Whatever politics a man may hold, if put down to teach in a school when on a wet day the cloaks, hats, bonnets, &c., are hung in the schoolroom, he would become a 'faddist,' if that is the proper term for those interested. I must add that all the schools in my deanery and districts have been treated with the utmost courtesy by the authorities, and that there have been no 'needless orders of alteration.'"

This showed that there was, at all events, one ecclesiastical authority who was thoroughly satisfied with the action of the Department. The Reports which were coming in from the Inspectors stated that the suggestions they had made for improvements in the arrangements had been received with courtesy and kindness. The reason why he spoke rather warmly to the hon. Member for Thirsk (Mr. J. G. Lawson) just now was, that he understood the hon. Member to be attacking him as a Minister and not as an individual, and it was a very strong thing to say that the Inspectors had had it from him that they were to favour one school more than another, and were to condemn one class of school for the sake of strengthening another. Any Minister would deserve to lose all his influence with the officials of his Department if he gave any directions of that sort, even if they merely savoured of partiality for one school as against another. If his predecessor (Sir W. Hart-Dyke), as Minister for Education, had been in Office for the last 18 months, he would have had to do a great many

things which he (Mr. Acland) had had to do. Speaking on the 31st of July, 1891, the right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Hart-Dyke) said that it would be the duty of the Education Department to secure greater effort in country schools, and that, as far as he was concerned, he was prepared to pledge himself and the Department that the educational methods of the country schools must be improved, and the excuse of poverty would no longer be permitted. If the right hon. Gentleman meant to carry out these words, and if he had remained in Office, he would have had to do a great deal of the work that he (Mr. Acland) had done. If hon. Members would study *The School Guardian*, as he did, they would know that the methods now adopted by both Church and Nonconformist schools were of a somewhat old-fashioned character. It was said that the Department was putting on too severe a pressure. He admitted that at the present time many of the supporters of voluntary schools were suffering from want of means, but he gathered from the Inspectors that there was great willingness in nine schools out of ten to meet all reasonable demands, and in many cases the friends of voluntary schools had raised the funds that were necessary. When in any case it could be shown that without his knowledge, as it usually was, some Inspector or official was putting unreasonable pressure upon a school, the friends of the school ought to do their best to let him (Mr. Acland) know, or ought to send a firm and respectful protest to the Department. He thought that the publication of the Returns he had promised would help to improve the position in all cases where there was any chance whatever of a voluntary school being condemned without its being brought to his knowledge. It was constantly stated on the platform that he was actuated by mere jealousy and envy of the voluntary schools. Such was not the case. When the State was giving more and more grants to these schools—and it might interest hon. Members to know that the grant actually given to voluntary schools this year had increased rather more than the grant given to Board Schools—it did not look as if he had shown any special disfavour to the voluntary schools. He said, however, that when the State gave from £6,000,000

Mr. Acland

to £7,000,000 to the voluntary schools the Government was bound to ask in return for thoroughly healthy buildings, and thoroughly good apparatus with which to carry on the education given. Everybody would agree that this was a reasonable demand to make.

MR. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, he had listened to the right hon. Gentleman's statement with some satisfaction, because it had carried them a little bit further than they had hitherto been carried in regard to the voluntary schools. The right hon. Gentleman could not blame gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House if they put on to his shoulders blame which he might be able to shift elsewhere. He could not but be aware of the fact that during the last 12 months—a period of time almost corresponding with the period during which the right hon. Gentleman had been in Office—there had been a strong and concerted action taken in the country by gentlemen who were supporters of the Government in opposition to the voluntary schools, and in support of the existence of the Board schools. Men who were identified with the Liberal Party in the districts in which they lived had forced on the creation of Board schools by the simple process of withdrawing their subscriptions. It was understood that the majority of gentlemen opposite believed in the Board system as being a better one than the voluntary system. [*“Hear, hear!” from the Ministerial Benches.*] That cheer was an endorsement of the accusation of his hon. Friend (Mr. J. G. Lawson). All his hon. Friend had said was that the policy of the Government and their supporters was to support the Board schools as opposed to the voluntary schools. All he had meant to convey was that if the Government could do it they would favour the creation of Board schools to the extinction of voluntary schools.

MR. ACLAND: What he said was that I had done that.

MR. W. LONG said, his hon. Friend's statement was that it was a matter of common notoriety that the Inspectors knew what the policy of the Government was, but it was not suggested that the Inspectors, who, as everyone who knew them would admit, discharged their duties with absolute fairness, integrity, and courtesy, lent

themselves to any unfair action. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House had felt compelled to represent the views which were held by a large section of the community on this question, and to present to the Vice President almost a prayer that something more than consideration might be shown to them in the circumstances in which they now found themselves. This was not a matter of politics. There were many Liberals in country and small urban districts who held the belief that a more inopportune moment on which to press increased expenditure on those districts could not have been chosen. The Government and his right hon. Friend the late Vice President (Sir W. Hart-Dyke) might say that the plea of poverty could not be entertained, but they could not deny the most deplorable fact that since 1891 the circumstances surrounding the small towns and agricultural districts had changed in a most lamentable degree for the worse. Agriculturists now found themselves confronted with what many believed to be inevitable ruin. They had cut down expenditure under all heads which might be classed as personal luxuries, enjoyments, or amusements. Squires had given up coming to London, and given up their horses and carriages and their pleasures, many of which promoted employment, and in some cases they were only living in their houses because no one would rent them. He knew from his own experience that rents in some agricultural districts had fallen by sums varying from 30 to 50 and, in some cases, 70 per cent. Even with these heavy reductions of rent the farmers found it extremely difficult to carry on their industry. It was nothing short of a farce and a mockery to insist on spending considerable sums in improving school accommodation when it was difficult to find for the labourers wages sufficient to provide bread for themselves and their children. Members knew very well that if the people of a small agricultural district were called upon to spend £300 or £500 on school accommodation the money must come out of the pockets of the owners, or else must be obtained by the clergyman and his friends by means which were known to everybody. When things were in the condition he had described it was nothing less than a

hardship and a cruelty to come down upon the owners and say, "In order that the strict letter of the law may be maintained you must find money for increased expenditure on the schools." Members on his side of the House did not differ with the right hon. Gentleman as to the provision, for instance, of cloak-rooms. No doubt it was undesirable that children and teachers should have to stand all day in a room where wet cloaks and hats were hung up. It was most undesirable that there should not be sufficient cubic space, or that all the children should be taught in the same room. It was very desirable there should be different rooms for the different grades, so that there should not be the confusion which existed in rooms where the unfortunate teachers had to teach four different classes of children of different ages. They believed in all these things as much as gentlemen opposite, but they thought that in many agricultural districts they were carrying the system of education a little too far, and putting too much pressure on the people. The Opposition were as much in favour as the gentlemen on the Government Benches of improvements in sanitary arrangements and in the matter of accommodation, and if the time were suitable and the money there they would be the last to stand in the way. On the contrary, the right hon. Gentleman had himself referred to what had been done by voluntary means in this country. The action of the supporters of the voluntary schools was not to be judged by the mere amount of subscriptions and by the enormous sums they had spent on school buildings, and in other ways, and he believed the right hon. Gentleman did not say more than the truth when he said, in reference to these voluntary schools, there was always an earnest desire on the part of the people to carry out the recommendations of the Inspectors, and to find the money for this purpose. The view held by many of the poorer and smaller squires and clergymen in the country districts was that, unless they were able to manage to raise the necessary money between this and the next visit of the Inspector, by one stroke of the pen they would find themselves minus a portion of their income; whilst to start and collect £200 or £300

in a rural district of this kind was to start an enterprise so difficult that it would be almost impossible to carry it to a successful issue. It was often urged that School Board expenditure was expenditure by an elected authority, and therefore responsible to their constituents, and entitled to spend money. But there was all the difference in the world between the expenditure of a School Board and an ordinary elected authority such as a Corporation or Local Board. The latter bodies were, after all, the judges of the necessity of the expenditure, and decided how it should be spent; but the School Boards had no discretion at all in the matter, being called upon to spend the money at the dictation of a Department in London, and according to the terms and conditions laid down. All they wished to urge on the Vice President was that it would be impossible immediately to carry out in many rural districts the changes required in the shape of improved accommodation, and that by not pressing the matter at once he would be relieving the people of a great difficulty and dread, and although the Department might not get buildings quite in conformity with their present views and regulations they would get buildings which would be practically satisfactory, and they would not find the people backward to meet them half way, and to do everything they could to make the education of children in voluntary schools a success. In recommending these views to the Vice President they were only asking that his Department should be governed by the same Rules which governed other Government Departments. He had the privilege of being associated for six years with a Government Department—the Local Government Board—which had more work to do through the medium of Inspectors than perhaps any other Board. But in carrying out its regulations the Local Government Board had always taken into consideration the local circumstances and exercised a discretion before imposing or adding to the burden of debt in a particular area. That was all they asked of the Vice President and of the Government. They did not ask them to relax their energies in the direction of strengthening and improving the educational system of the country, but they asked them not to apply their rule under

a set of cast-iron conditions, but to have regard to all the local circumstances and considerations, to the severe depression and real suffering which at present existed. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that such a course would do no harm, but rather do good to the cause of education, whilst it would enormously lighten the great burden of sorrow and difficulty, which at present weighed heavily on the smaller squires, parsons, and farmers of this country.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I rise to say a very few words to remove an entire misapprehension on the part of the hon. Gentleman, who has just spoken in a very able way, and on the part of the gentlemen who sit behind him. They seem to be under the impression that my right hon. Friend and the Government are acting in this matter as if it were a question of the Board schools against the voluntary schools. My right hon. Friend disavows that altogether. The question here is not a question between Board schools and voluntary schools. It is a question between good buildings and insufficient buildings. The view of the Government is that, considering the enormous sums of money which are contributed out of public taxation towards elementary education, it is their duty to see that the education is adequate, and the school accommodation of a good description. It is the duty of the Government to see that school buildings are fairly good buildings. If the argument of the hon. Member went for anything at all, it was that unfit buildings are to be allowed because they belong to voluntary schools and because the agricultural interest is depressed. Every one deplores the depression in agriculture; but we cannot allow a plea of that kind to be set up in defence of insanitary buildings. It would be entirely wrong.

MR. W. LONG: I did not suggest, nor did anybody here, that that plea was in defence of insanitary schools. If there be anything insanitary it ought, of course, to be immediately remedied. All we have suggested is that where the improvement takes the direction of what may no doubt be regarded as an improvement, but one which is not absolutely necessary to the health of education of the children, that these alterations should be postponed until the great

cloud of depression at present hanging over us has disappeared.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I used the word "insanitary" because of the special instance the hon. Member gave us of the cubic space for school children. A greater sanitary question than that it is impossible to conceive; therefore, he must excuse me for taking the illustration out of his own mouth.

MR. W. LONG: I am afraid the right hon. Gentleman did not listen to what I said. I did not instance insufficient cubic space nor the keeping of children in the same room as being desirable, but quite the reverse. I stated that sufficient cubic space for the children and the necessary separation of classes were most desirable objects which ought to be carried out. As to the provision of cloak-rooms, corridors, and other things, I did not regard them as so necessary, and suggested that they might be deferred.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I accept the explanation of the hon. Gentleman, and I do not wish to misquote him in any way. All that the Government and my right hon. Friend desire is to insist that the schools should be kept in a reasonable condition for carrying on their work, and we cannot allow the fact that a school is a voluntary school to be urged as a reason why it should be treated differently to other schools. That is the line on which the Government ought to proceed and upon which they are bound to proceed. That is the spirit in which we have acted. We have no desire whatever to enforce the rule in a harsh or pedantic spirit, and we cannot make any distinction between voluntary and Board schools in respect of insisting that they shall be reasonably fit for carrying on the work of education.

MR. RICHARDSON (Durham, S.E.) said, he wished to enter his protest against the strong language which had been used by the hon. and learned Member for Thirsk as to the treatment of voluntary schools by the Education Department. Whenever he had had to see the Vice President of the Council he had always been met with the utmost cordiality with respect to every question which had been raised by the hon. and learned Member, and had always obtained reasonable satisfaction. Of course, they had always gone with a good case; they had not contended that insanitary and

bad schools should be continued. In one case the Church of England schools and the voluntary schools with which he was connected approached the right hon. Gentleman together, and they attained their object. In another case the inhabitants of one rural parish with which he was connected found themselves unable to bear the burden which would have been imposed upon them by the establishment of a Board school, and consequently it was agreed by nearly all to submit to a voluntary rate of 1d. in the £1 for the purpose of carrying on the work of education. Even then, however, they still found themselves short of money, and the poor landowners, of whom he was one, agreed to make up the deficiency, contributing in proportion to the amount of their rent-rolls. And in that place they had earned the highest grant of any school in their neighbourhood. He thought it might be well if hon. Gentlemen opposite would endeavour to help voluntary schools in the same manner.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President had complained that this discussion was now raised for the second time this Session. That might be so; but this was a matter of absolutely vital importance to more than half the elementary schools of England, and the opportunities of raising a discussion were few. Unless they had seized that opportunity they might not have had another for a very considerable period; therefore they must be excused if they once more raised the question. In the first place, might he remark that the principles laid down so very smoothly by the Leader of the House were very plausible to the ear, but they directly militated against the voluntary and in favour of the Board school system. It was all very well to talk of equal treatment for Board schools and voluntary schools. The School Board had always the long purse of the ratepayers to fall back upon, and were able cheerfully to comply with requisitions for improvements. The Leader of the House spoke of improvements in accommodation being designed to make the buildings fairly good. That was an abstract proposition which was undeniable, but what was meant by "fairly good"? He submitted that the presumption that the buildings were

fairly good was, *primâ facie*, in favour of the voluntary schools, which were at this moment advancing more rapidly than the Board schools. The argument as to cubic space also sounded very plausible, but would anyone with a knowledge of the subject deny that the health and appearance of the children in voluntary schools were better than in the Board schools? No one who looked at the rosy cheeks and healthy aspect of our children in country schools would think much of the cubic space argument. The Leader of the House spoke of it being impossible to favour voluntary schools. But why not? Had not voluntary schools peculiar claims on the country in that they had saved the general taxpayer's sums of money not only in the original capital for providing the school, but in the cost of management? Did anyone doubt that if owing to this new system inaugurated by the present Government the voluntary schools were to be done away with, perhaps £1,000,000 would be added to the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Therefore, the voluntary schools had a claim upon their favour, and ought not to be treated with cast-iron rules in comparison with Board schools. They acknowledged the experience, the diligence, and the high political reputation of the Vice President. They admitted he always spoke very fairly indeed—in fact, it was difficult to take exception to any expression with which he favoured them. But they had to look at the practical result of the action of the Department; and when they came to opinions they must beg leave to remind the right hon. Gentleman that he formed part of a Government which had, through its individual Members, declared the hope that the introduction of the free education system would bring about the establishment of Board schools everywhere. He should be able from the pages of *Hansard* to produce ample proof of that contention in the speeches of hon. Gentlemen opposite delivered when in Opposition. All his hon. Friend the Member for Thirsk meant to say was, that the Inspectors—gentlemen of culture and knowledge—were seised with information of the fact that there was a Government now in power who were conscientiously of opinion that the Board school system was better than the

voluntary system, and when they saw there had been a marked change of policy absolutely coincident with the time of the accession of the Vice President to power, they could not be surprised that those interested in voluntary schools attributed it to the declared opinions of the gentlemen who formed the Government. The Vice President had declared that had there been no change of Government many of the things now ordered by the Department would have been done or ordered by his predecessor (Sir W. Hart-Dyke). He might remind the Committee that after the introduction of the Free Education Act in the Debates in which his right hon. Friend's utterances were quoted, his right hon. Friend (Sir W. Hart-Dyke) remained in Office for fully one year, and during that year, and after the utterances which had been quoted that day, were there any complaints of this kind? He apprehended there were none? There was, no doubt, very valuable but judicious improvement and progress which were accepted by everyone and caused annoyance to no one. That went on from the Autumn of 1891 when the Free Education Act was passed to the Autumn of 1892. Since 1892, however, there had been nothing but complaints, incessant and widespread, which were deepening every month. This was their excuse for again bringing this matter under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman. The improvements which were now being pressed upon the voluntary schools were not strictly educational but solely material, and were, consequently, of secondary importance. The question was not so much whether a school had a good playground and all the accommodation that was desired, but the far greater question was whether the children were healthy and strong, whether they were improved in the mind and moral discipline and so forth, and in all these cardinal respects nothing had been said against the voluntary schools; therefore, it was very hard, at a time when they were doing all that which was most purely and essentially the work of education, that at that very moment the opportunity should be taken of compelling them to do things dependent upon secondary and material considerations quite apart from the moral, intellectual, and educational question. If the schools had existed so

many generations and gone on gradually improving under former Ministers, why should this particular spurt be put on just now at the very worst time when pressure could be put on? The schools had gone on all these years; they had complied with all the Regulations of the Education Department, and most of these buildings which were found fault with now had been approved by successive Education Departments and Ministers. Why, therefore, should this change be made now? Surely these rapid and sudden modifications of policy were greatly to be deprecated in such matters as these, affecting long-existing institutions and also affecting a most meritorious class who had long been doing a good work and who happened to be just now financially depressed. There was no doubt that the various Boards of Managers fully recognised the duties which rested upon them, and were anxious and willing to do all in their power to meet them. All they asked was that they should not be hounded on to destruction before they had had the necessary time given them in which to endeavour to make their arrangements. There was no doubt whatever, notwithstanding the statement of the particular rural dean whom the right hon. Gentleman quoted, that if they could have a *plébiscite* of the rural deans all over the country, there could be no mistake as to what their opinion was. It would be far more satisfactory if they could be favoured with the name and locality of the rev. gentleman, because if evidence of that important character was quoted in the House and made the basis of Ministerial argument they should certainly have some means of judging of the value of that evidence. In the absence of such evidence the right hon. Gentleman must excuse them if, provisionally, they declined to attach much weight to the case he had quoted. There was a widespread apprehension in many districts that the Inspectors were inclined to press every demand they could, and it was greatly to be feared that unless money could be found the voluntary system would be driven from many of the poorer country districts. Might he make one remark regarding this arrangement which he understood to have been entered into between the Vice President of the Council and the Member for Rochester?

Unfortunately, during that afternoon he was extremely busy in the School Board for London, and had not the advantage and benefit of hearing what the Minister said. But, of course, if any Return had been promised, and that Return had given satisfaction to the Member for Rochester, he should also be inclined to be satisfied, only he did not know exactly what the Return was. If it had not been formulated and printed in such a way that they could examine it they should not accept it as satisfactory. He hoped some arrangement would be come to whereby all the demands made upon the various schools should be tabulated in a quarterly form, so that everyone should know beforehand what these demands were. After all, what was the particular request which was made to the right hon. Gentleman? Those who spoke on behalf of the voluntary system did not deny that, although the material condition of these school buildings was of infinitely less importance than the living teaching that went on inside them, yet that the school buildings and playgrounds were matters which ought to be improved with the growing requirements of a progressive age. But what they said was that, considering that they found the money for building the schools, that they had kept them in repair, and largely through their financial exertions saved the ratepayers the grievous cost of education, they ought to be treated with tenderness, moderation, and considerateness. That was their claim, and they contended that as yet they had not been so treated. Perhaps, after hearing their constant remonstrances, the right hon. Gentleman would now be induced to show them that consideration for which they asked, and, if so, they would forgive him for all the trouble he had unnecessarily occasioned. They demanded that time should be given for carrying out the requirements of the Education Department. The time allowed should be two or three years, and even then there should be a gradual improvement; and as long as a school did a little bit this year, it should be taken as a guarantee of the earnest that it would do more the next year or the year after. [Mr. ACLAND: Hear, hear!] If the right hon. Gentleman would translate his "hear, hear" into practice, they

should be thankful, and if he would only have patience with them they would make all the required improvements in due time.

*MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said, he also had a complaint to make against the right hon. Gentleman. It had been suggested that the Vice President proceeded with the utmost rigour of the law against Church voluntary schools, so that these schools had to be closed, and the districts had to have Board schools and School Boards. His complaint was that the right hon. Gentleman proceeded with the utmost rigour of the law against British schools, which were voluntary schools belonging to the Nonconformists. He acquitted the right hon. Gentleman of the charge which had been absurdly made against him of religious persecution, because he was impartial, and what he did was to enforce at once, and strictly, the Regulations of his Department. He quite admitted that this was the right hon. Gentleman's duty; but what he ventured to submit was that he should proceed gently and with caution. To carry out the Regulations at once would mean that unless a great effort were made certain British schools in his constituency and elsewhere would have to be closed. In the agricultural districts, especially, there ought to be very gentle treatment, for they were a tender part. There was only one cure for the present state of things, and that was to consider the whole question of how far it was legitimate to place all these burdens on the land. He quite understood, when the landed interest had protection and was treated in a way they now thought improper, preferential, and unfair, there were good reasons for the imposition of such burdens; but when it had no longer this preference, it began to be time to see how far the burdens on the land should be removed. In speaking thus he was not saying anything that would be contradicted by any Liberal Member who represented any agricultural district, and was aware of the sad state into which agriculture had fallen. In dealing with agricultural districts he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to remember he was dealing with places in which there was great depression and poverty. No one was more anxious than he to see the schools improved in every respect, but it would be

an unfortunate thing to ruin the inhabitants for the sake of their education. He rose because he could not go back to the agricultural districts without protesting against the whole of these increased educational charges being always placed on the land in all places and under all circumstances.

*SIR W. HART-DYKE (Kent, Dartford) : I have an apology to make to the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Gentlemen in the House. Unfortunately I had to take the chair at a meeting in another place, and was unable to be present at the commencement of this discussion. It is perfectly obvious that I am partly answerable, at all events, for the existing state of things from the educational point of view. I should be the last man to attempt to repudiate for one instant that responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has, I am informed, made a statement, replying to a somewhat severe criticism upon the present policy of the Education Department, and I am told that he has quoted observations of mine in this House, and has also made a statement to the effect that many of the demands made upon voluntary schools are demands which would have been equally made had I remained in Office.

MR. ACLAND : Perhaps I might explain to the right hon. Gentleman that I only quoted an old quotation which he is well aware of, for I quoted it on the Estimates last year.

*SIR W. HART-DYKE : That quotation was to this effect : that in asking the taxpayers of this country to pay a somewhat advanced sum for education, it was due to the Minister asking for that sum, or the Government responsible for it, that this sum should not be wasted, but that there should be a proportionate improvement in our educational system. From that pledge I do not wish to take away one jot or tittle, but having listened to this Debate it appears to me that two things are obvious. In the first place, there must be some reason for this universal outcry in England with regard to

the present treatment of these smaller voluntary schools in rural parishes by the Department, and although I am not here to quote instances, yet I think it is fair, at all events, to urge this on the Committee : that it is impossible to listen to these complaints—especially for those of us who come from rural districts—without believing that harsh and cruel treatment has been somehow or other meted out. It has been said that during the year I was in Office, after these vast changes in educational administration were made, there were no complaints, and that that, *primâ facie*, points to the conclusion that so far as I was concerned no hardship was inflicted. However that may be, it must be admitted that there is something more than a grievance established. I think the Department should have proceeded more on the lines of common sense, and met the cases according to the circumstances as they might arise, with a full consideration of the financial position of those who are connected with agriculture and its present disastrous condition. The right hon. Gentleman has proceeded upon a more hasty and determined policy. Instead of allowing the improvements required to be made to be spread over one, two, or three years, he has given rise by his action to the impression that his policy involves the hustling of these unfortunate schools out of existence by bringing a strain on their finances which they are unable to bear. That is the only reason I can adduce for the present state of affairs. I have known instances myself where the managers of small rural schools have made complaints of this nature. In one case they were called upon to spend £60 to put their school in perfect sanitary condition ; and no sooner had they done that—for that demand was one which no reasonable school manager would resent—than they were asked to spend £50 in providing a cloak-room for the girls. The right hon. Gentleman may ask what I would have done under the circumstances. I will tell him. I should have considered the small resources of this school, and after the school had been put in a sanitary condition I should have given it at least 12 months' rest before making fresh demands upon it. That would have been the policy I should have been inclined to adopt.

MR. ACLAND: Where was that school?

*SIR W. HART-DYKE: At Eynsford, within half a mile of my own residence. That seems to have been the policy of the right hon. Gentleman. I do not wish to speak in any bitter Party spirit in this matter. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman has spoken in a somewhat generous spirit in reply to the demands made upon him, and that in his very moderate speech he has indicated that he would rather relax the strings than tighten them. I think we ought to meet him in a fair non-Party spirit. We none of us wish the schools to fall into decay, and all of us unite in the desire to have them made efficient as soon as possible. I will submit this point. Assuming for a moment that the right hon. Gentleman is the oppressor of voluntary schools, which many of our supporters in this country suspect, and that his object is to wreck the existence of all these small schools, I can assure him that there is no more inefficient school than the small Board school in a very poor parish. That has been proved by very severe tests. The tiny Board school in a poor, half-starved parish is just as bad, if not worse, than the worst voluntary school. This matter should, therefore, not be discussed from the sectarian or non-sectarian point of view, or as a question between Board or Voluntary Schools. The point is how, when agriculture is in such a state of depression as we have never known before, how to best encourage the managers of these voluntary schools to make them thoroughly efficient. You wish the school now earning a small grant to be converted into such an efficient school as will enable it to earn a grant practically sufficient to make it self-supporting. Is it common sense, while that process of conversion is going on, to so press it from a financial point of view as to drive it out of existence altogether? Yet that will be the inevitable effect in agricultural districts. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will take to heart the discussion which has taken place. We do not wish to press him unduly, but we do ask him to give these voluntary schools

a reasonable time in which to make themselves efficient. I have one more word to say on a broader question. Comparisons have been made between my action and that of the present Vice President. I wish to press upon the Committee that there can be no worse thing in the cause of education than anything like reaction as to the treatment of the schools by one Vice President and another. That is a reason why I ask the right hon. Gentleman to be merciful to these schools, so that whoever may succeed him may keep an even keel between the two contending Parties. I hope he will treat voluntary schools with common justice, which is all we can demand.

MR. GODSON (Kidderminster) said, that in the district he represented heavy charges were thrown upon the managers of schools by reason of the demands of the Education Department. There would be a call on the Archdeaconry for the sum of £2,000, and in that district, owing to the prevailing depression of trade and agriculture, they were at their wits' end as to where to find the money. It was impossible to find it at present, but it was hoped that with outside assistance it might be collected within the next few years. Considering the terrible state of agriculture and trade in the towns, he need hardly point out to the Vice President of the Council the immense difficulty of raising these sums of money. There was a case in which, within his own knowledge, the demands of the Department pressed very heavily indeed. It was a case of a school which had always secured the very best reports, and in which those who managed affairs had from time to time effected improvements even when they had not been required by the Education Department. If this were a case where the school had not come up to the requirements of the Department the grievance, he admitted, would not be so great. But it was not. The difficulty was caused by increased attendance of children, and because of that increase and of the requirements of the Department the managers had to find a sum of over £300. There was no unseemly competition between the School Board and the managers of the voluntary schools in

the district; on the contrary, the most amicable arrangements existed between them; indeed, the authorities of the School Board supplemented the wants of the voluntary schools where they could. The Roman Catholic priest had made the same complaint of the want of consideration shown by the Department. All the schools in this district had been certified as efficient for years, and it was unjust to threaten them in the way which had been done. The difficulty of the voluntary schools of the borough was that their best supporters were large employers of labour; and trade was never so bad with them as it had been lately. They were the men who had to pay the enormously increased rates, and now on the top of that came the expense of this unjust demand of the Department for unnecessary improvements in the schools. The circumstances were such as would justify the right hon. Gentleman in giving a much longer time for the completion of the improvements required.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he was astonished at those who professed to be the friends of the voluntary schools raising these constant Debates, for he felt convinced that they did the schools a great deal of harm. For the last 20 years he had been a manager and hon. secretary of a voluntary school in his parish. He was opposed to these payments, and thought it was the duty of the parents of the children attending the voluntary schools to make the buildings decent and respectable. If they had these constant appeals for favouritism to be shown he was afraid they would in the end lead to the closing of the voluntary schools altogether. The people would say, "Rather than have a continuance of this sort of thing we will insist on our rights and have Board schools." Notwithstanding the interest he took in voluntary schools, if they asked him as a matter of principle which was the best system he should say, with more courage than the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council, that undoubtedly the School Board system was the best. He was told that in Scotland they had a School Board in every parish, and it would not do for hon. Members opposite to claim for their con-

stituencies that they were more Christian and religious than the people of Scotland. Therefore, undoubtedly, if there were too many difficulties raised the people of this country would demand—as they had a right to do—that there should be a School Board in every parish in the United Kingdom. Personally, he was not desirous of forcing that system on the country too soon, because so long as voluntary schools could be worked without religious difficulties—as they had been able to work them in London—they were a saving to the ratepayers. Until they could get an alteration of the incidence of taxation, so as to make freeholders pay a fair share of the local taxation of the country, it was their duty to rate the occupiers and present ratepayers as little as they could. As one interested in Church schools, and who had worked for them, he must say that the gentlemen on the London School Board and in the House who were raising these questions and asking for favouritism were doing their best to close the voluntary schools altogether.

SIR R. TEMPLE asked if it was in Order on this Vote to discuss the question of the interior management of the School Board for London?

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot say that the hon. Member is out of Order.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he was calling attention to the objection raised by hon. Gentlemen with regard to how Church and other schools ought to be treated, and he said distinctly that if the policy adopted by a certain majority of the London School Board were successful it would bring about the closing of the voluntary schools altogether, because the people would rise and say, "We will have nothing of the sort." He was anxious that there should be popular teaching in all elementary schools, and that the Bible should be read and explained in them. The action of the people to whom he referred would drive the Bible out of the school altogether. It was not the Bible they wanted. They wanted to introduce the Prayer Book and get rid of the Bible. He was anxious to keep the Bible there. They heard a great deal of talk about Church schools and the necessity of

having Church teaching, but, unfortunately, Churchmen refused to subscribe to the schools. If they subscribed to them as they used to there would be no difficulty in carrying them on, but whether by general subscriptions or subscriptions in churches, Churchmen would not support their schools except by talking and finding fault with the School Board system. It must not be forgotten that by means of the fee grant and other grants they got from the Government they could pretty nearly support the schools. It was nonsense, therefore, to say that the schools were supported by voluntary subscriptions. He admitted that, owing to the assistance of voluntary effort like that of himself and others, voluntary schools were conducted more cheaply than Board schools. That might be another reason for keeping them going a certain time. And the teaching was as good in the voluntary as in the Board schools. The criterion of how they were getting on was the grant they earned, and they could earn as much in the voluntary as they could in the Board schools. Hon. Gentlemen opposite who were so anxious about these Church schools, if they would subscribe a little more to them, and do a little more work in connection with them themselves, so as to prevent unnecessary expense, they would find that the schools would be able to go on. If they continually raised agitation in the form of disputes between Church and chapel, they would be doing their best to bring about the closing of the voluntary schools.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said, that the action of hon. Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) side of the House was directed against Board schools and in favour of the voluntary schools. The contention of his hon. Friend and others was that the head of the Education Department was interpreting in too strict and pedantic a spirit the Regulations with respect to schools throughout the country.

MR. A. C. MORTON (interrupting) said, that there was no proof of that. So far as he was concerned, he had 20 years' experience as a manager of voluntary schools, and in that time the Department had always shown the greatest

leniency in the matter of repairs and alterations.

COMMANDER BETHELL said, he was delighted to have given the hon. Member the opportunity of making that explanation, but it was all a matter of opinion. He (Commander Bethell) had risen because he had a complaint to hurl at the head of the Vice President of the Council. He wished to say that, however much the right hon. Gentleman might protest, and however good his motives might be, the fact undoubtedly remained that he had not succeeded in inspiring confidence in his administration among the managers of schools throughout the country. That was what was said by hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House. There were two instances of the unreasonable demands of the Department during the right hon. Gentleman's administration within his own experience. In one case a school had been put to heavy expense to build an extra cloak-room, which was absolutely unnecessary from a scholastic point of view or from the point of view of health. In the other case the Department required certain windows to be put in, when the school had been specially ventilated and built on the most approved plan, and when there was no purpose to be served by the alteration but the fulfilment of a pedantic interpretation of the law.

MR. HUDSON (Herts, Hitchin) pointed out that in some districts of the country there was a great dearth of schoolmasters and mistresses.

MR. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.) said, that the Church of England, which at one time had charge of education almost exclusively, did not now wish to act as a drag on it. This was a question affecting not only Church schools, but also Board schools, Roman Catholic schools, and schools under Nonconformist Bodies. The requirements of the Department pressed very heavily upon schools in connection with which it was not possible to raise quite so much money now as in better times owing to the dreadful agricultural and trade depression. The proposed conditions applied to all voluntary schools, and the question of the minimum space of any room used as

a schoolroom became a very serious matter. He wished to point out that in many country schools the number of children who attended might not be more than 10 or 15, or even five. In such a case the present schoolroom, although smaller than the area now stated as being in future the smallest size that would be allowed to be used—namely, 18 feet by 15—was, he submitted, in many cases, amply large enough. If they were to have these large rooms to afford accommodation to such a small number of children the result in cold weather would be that the children would suffer more from cold than overheating. He should like also to call attention to the fact that there was one stereotyped hard-and-fast rule for schools which existed in airy country districts and schools which existed in overcrowded town districts. Children who had to walk a mile to school in a country district, and who lived a great deal in the open air—their playground being outside their cottage door—did not suffer so much from being in a small schoolroom as children who lived in a large town would. He hoped, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman would promise that the Education Department would not enforce their powers too hurriedly. Time should be allowed for the carrying out of instructions, and before they took steps to pull down the old schoolrooms or build new ones in agricultural districts, they would make a careful investigation into the average number of children who attended at each particular school.

MR. ACLAND said, that he had listened with interest to the speeches that had been made since he last spoke. It had been asked why there were no complaints under his predecessor, especially during his last year at the Education Department. One of the reasons why there were no complaints during the time in Office of his predecessor was that the managers of voluntary Church schools not unnaturally received with more willingness any direction or request from the Education Department when it was under the direction of the Party opposite than when it

was under a Liberal Government. [*Cries of "Why?"*] Well, he thought his right hon. Friend (Sir W. Hart-Dyke) would admit that he found voluntary schools more docile, although, unfortunately, he was obliged to make demands which, if he (Mr. Acland) had made them, might have caused further ground for complaint. But he did not wish to press that point. He regretted that in some directions a great deal of alarm had been manifested as to what steps the Department intended to take with regard to certain matters which was not at all justified, and in many places there was an impression that the demand was going to be pressed on with great rapidity. He was glad, however, to find that all hon. Members were agreed on this point—namely, that schools, whether in town or country, ought, as far as possible, to be decent, respectable, and healthy places so as to give every advantage to the children who attended. He would remind hon. Members that he had given a promise on Thursday last which indicated his desire that the pressure should not be too rapid or extreme. He hoped that the Return which was being made quarter by quarter would enable the House to see whether too severe a pressure had been exercised, and for everybody to be aware of the exact state of the facts if the stage of condemnation of any particular school was arrived at. That should lessen the fear of any underground action by the Department against voluntary schools. The specific cases which had been mentioned he would take care to inquire into. It was a great assistance to him to have these things brought to his notice, so that he might watch the action of different Inspectors and officers to see whether in some parts of the country the pressure was more severe than it ought to be. The dearth of teachers in country schools was receiving his constant attention, and he hoped the Department was not taking any action which would make the difficulties of little schools more severe than they now were. It was not his wish that there should be large class-rooms for very small schools. He was desirous to give reasonable time for compliance with the demands now being made, and would promise to give the matter further and more special attention.

MR. J. G. LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) said, after the interesting statement which had been made by the right hon. Gentleman, he did not wish to press the Motion, and was willing to withdraw it.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) rose to call attention to a subject under Class VII. of the Vote.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Sir J. GOLDSMID) asked whether any hon. Gentleman desired to call attention to any point in the Vote relating to previous classes?

SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) desired to call attention to the Vote for the British Museum under Class III.

MR. A. C. MORTON rose to a point of Order. He desired to point out that the Chairman (Mr. Mellor) had given a different ruling only a few minutes previously.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS wished to call attention to a subject under a previous class.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said, only one Member could be heard at a time. Hon. Gentlemen must wait their turn. There had been no different ruling. The Chairman had decided that no proposal could be made with regard to an item which had been passed. In order to save any question arising he had asked whether any hon. Gentleman wished to raise a question on a class prior to that to which an hon. Gentleman was proceeding to refer.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that was refused to him a quarter of an hour ago.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Sir Francis Powell.

*SIR F. S. POWELL said, an announcement had been made in the public journals during the last few days as to a very considerable extension of the British Museum. He hoped the Minister in charge of this Vote would give the Committee some further information. The reform indicated by the

announcement was a very desirable one. He was glad to know this National Institution was to be rendered more secure from fire, for this was a point of gigantic importance, and he was confident the country would welcome the proposal without a dissentient voice.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) said, it was quite true that the Treasury had agreed with the Trustees of the Museum for the purchase from the Duke of Bedford of a considerable amount of property around the present building. The cost would be £200,000, but it was hoped that by adopting a system of annuities the payment, instead of being provided for in this or next year's Vote, might be spread over a number of years. By that means additions of a large amount to the British Museum Vote would be avoided. A Bill on the subject would in a short time, he hoped, be introduced. The whole of the property acquired would not be utilised at once for the purpose of extension, and so part of it would for a time bring in revenue. It was, however, proposed at once to remove the boilers and other possible causes of fire from the basement of the building, where they were now considered to be dangerous. The House would have an opportunity of considering the plan when the Bill was brought in, and all he would now say was that it was very gratifying to have been able to secure this property at a moderate price, and to know that the taxpayers would not have to provide all the purchase money in one year.

*SIR F. S. POWELL said, he had another question to raise on the same Vote. He was thoroughly satisfied with the answer of the right hon. Gentleman to his last question, and he desired to ask him now as to the National Gallery. The Trustees of the Gallery in their Report spoke in the most emphatic terms of the want of space, as not only were all the walls fully covered, but screens were also used to the fullest extent. Were the Government prepared at an early date to extend the National Gallery?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT explained that the barracks near the building must first

be removed. When that could be done the Gallery would be extended. The matter, he hoped, had been satisfactorily arranged.

SIR F. S. POWELL: Will it be done at an early date?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The barracks cannot be removed until provision has been made for the troops elsewhere. The accommodation is about to be provided.

MR. FREEMAN-MITFORD (Warwick, Stratford) asked if there were no means of separating the modern from the ancient school of pictures? If one school were removed to another gallery it would give a large amount of additional space at the National Gallery.

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** I am not aware of any proposal to separate the two schools. I have received no communication on the subject, and am not aware that the Treasury are considering the subject.

MR. FREEMAN-MITFORD: Was there not an offer made by a private gentleman to provide a building for the modern school?

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** Yes, a building is being provided, but I am not aware whether it is intended for modern pictures now at the National Gallery. I will obtain fuller information by the time the Vote comes on.

***SIR F. S. POWELL** next asked when the Committee might expect the statement promised by the Vice President of the Council with regard to the Vote for University Colleges. They had been informed they should have a Report on the work done before the Vote was granted. He hoped the Committee would have full opportunity of considering the matter.

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT** said, he was sure the Vice President would produce the Report in time to ensure its ample consideration.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that although he was entitled on that Vote to raise the question of our continued occupation of Egypt, he did not intend to avail himself of the opportunity. It must be understood, however, that he and those who concurred

with him had not surrendered their views, and that they contemplated moving in the matter on another occasion.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he wished to make a few observations on the Franco-Siamese Question. We had placed a Representative at Bangkok mainly for the sake of British interests which constituted a preponderating item in Siamese trade, and in commercial circles very great interest was felt in the new Convention between France and Siam. It was feared that France might be acquiring an overweening and overwhelming influence in Siam, and that sooner or later arrangements would be made interfering with or hampering, impairing, and prejudicing British commercial interests. This apprehension was aggravated by the great delay in the publication of official Papers. There appeared to be no means of ascertaining the exact nature of the arrangement being made, and meanwhile France continued to occupy a portion of Siamese territory greatly to the injury of British prestige. He trusted that the publication of Papers would not be delayed until the arrangements regarding the buffer State on the north-east frontier of Siam were completed. There was anxiety lest some arrangement should be made at the expense of British merchants in favour of French merchants. It was the independence of Siam which British merchants desired, so that they might be able to prosecute the commerce which had become the main factor in their Siamese politics, and they were anxious that some Convention should be made between France and England in order to guarantee that independence, and to secure that freedom of commerce which had done so much honour to our national repute in the south-eastern portion of Asia, and which was essential to the future prosperity of Siam itself. He hoped the Under Secretary would be able to give some additional assurance regarding the early production of Papers, which would alone enable hon. Members to judge as to whether the conduct of the British Foreign Office had been worthy of the repute of England in Asiatic regions.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES** said, he wished to call attention to a matter in-

volved a small sum but a great principle. It arose on the Diplomatic Vote, and had been opened up by the Auditor General. It appeared that in the Chinese and Japanese Consular Services there were apparently no Regulations whatever regarding absence on sick leave and consequent reduction to be made in pay. It was said that there were general Rules, but it did not seem to be clear how the Rules applied. One officer had been absent for two years and another for 18 months, and yet they had received five-eighths of their pay. He asked for an assurance from the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to whom he had given notice of the question, that such a state of things would not be allowed to continue.

*SIR E. GREY said, it was true notice had been given him; but as he received it only an hour previously, he had not had time to make inquiry into the matter. Inquiries would, however, be made, and he would be glad to place the information which he obtained at the disposal of the hon. Member. With reference to Siam, he could only repeat what he had previously stated, that Her Majesty's Government were anxious to lay Papers on the subject on the Table, but they had been waiting until the proceedings in connection with the trial of a Siamese officer who was accused of the murder of Inspector Groscurin had been concluded. One stage of that trial had been finished, but they must wait until they knew whether further proceedings were going to take place. As the Foreign Office understood the matter, this was the one outstanding point at present in dispute between France and Siam; and having waited so long, it would be a pity not to allow the respective Governments to come to what, it was hoped, would be a satisfactory conclusion before Papers were presented on the subject. That was the sole reason for the delay.

SIR R. TEMPLE inquired whether the first stage of the trial alluded to did not consist of the acquittal of the prisoner?

SIR E. GREY: Yes, Sir; that is true.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he desired to move a reduction of Vote 1 in Class VII., and thereby to resume the

Debate commenced at a quarter-past 12, and subsequently interrupted. The Vote he had to discuss was that in connection with the Deer Forests Commission, and, in the first place, he wished to object to the charge for a paid Royal Commission. There could be no worse plan than the appointment of a paid Commission to sit on equal terms with the unpaid Commissioners, and the objection was still more pronounced in this case, because it was known that this particular Commission held views adverse to those entertained by the Crofters. This Commissioner, too, used his own casting vote in connection with the payment to himself of a sum of five guineas per day. It had been generally acknowledged that the system of having one Commissioner on a Board paid while his colleagues were not paid was very unfair, and, in his opinion, that made the paid Commissioner's Report absolutely worthless. If they desired expert evidence it should be independent, and not that of a paid Commissioner; and that was why he objected to the payment of Sir Colin Moncrieff, who was selected to give evidence by the Welsh Land Commission, although it was common knowledge that he was in favour of the landlords and against the crofters. For his own part, he did not believe a Royal Commission on Deer Forests was ever wanted. It was merely a scheme to delay the settlement of the question. The crofters were not satisfied with the action of the Commissioners who revised their rents, because the reductions made were notoriously insufficient, and they unanimously demanded more land. Everybody knew that that land was to be obtained, in districts from which the crofters in the past had been driven, to enable deer forests to be established, and everybody knew, too, that in years gone by crofters had been able successfully to till that land. Why, then, was a Royal Commission needed? All that was necessary was power to take the land and re-settle the crofters and their families upon it. No Commission could give that power; that could only be granted by Parliament. The Secretary for Scotland had said that the Commissioners had been very hard-worked. Well, it struck him they had a very nice holiday all last summer.

SIR G. TREVELYAN : Not in rough weather.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, his view was, the rougher the weather at sea the more enjoyable the trip. Of course, he was not speaking of those who were afraid of water. The truth was, the Commission was in the West of Scotland during the summer months, and it enjoyed a nice holiday at the public expense, while ordinary Members of Parliament were really working hard in connection with their legislative duties in London. He had to protest against the Commissioners' refusal to present an interim Report, and could only attribute that refusal to their desire to secure another pleasant holiday. He had taken all the pains he could, by visiting the crofters, to understand their position, and he was quite satisfied that he knew quite as much about them as hon. Members opposite. He had gathered from the people themselves what their position was. There was no people more entitled to goodwill and sympathy than the crofters. And, therefore, he could not understand what had been done by Sir Colin Moncrieff. He was an official witness at the Welsh Commission. Evidently he did not know much about the matter. He went down, as he understood, to give official evidence with regard to figures which were in the office at Edinburgh, and the Government ought to have taken care that he did no more than this. He had no right to express any opinion whatever. [Sir G. TREVELYAN : What opinion ?] With regard to the crofter population generally. Practically, what had appeared in the papers had not been denied. He did not object to the Government sending a witness down to the Welsh Commission, but they ought to send somebody who understood the matter. Let them, for instance, send a crofter who would understand the condition and wants and requirements of the people, instead of a highly-paid official who was a friend of the landlord. The least the Government could do when they sent officials to give evidence on one side was to send somebody to represent the case of the crofters also. He was going to move to reduce this Vote by £100. It was an important

matter, and it was his desire to assist the Crofter Members and the crofters to obtain their rights. The crofters were a most law-abiding population and were entitled to sympathetic consideration. They were entitled to the land, which they had been robbed of in many cases, so long as they paid a fair price for it. He was quite willing they should pay a fair price for the land, but the land ought not to be given up to sporting gentlemen who had more money and time than they knew what to do with.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
"That the Item of £9,000, for Temporary Commissioners, be reduced by £100."—(Mr. A. C. Morton.)

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said, the crofter people were by no means satisfied with the Deer Forest Commission. They certainly took exception to one man, who was the friend of the landlords. The valuer of this Commission was receiving five guineas a day, while the other Commissioners received a guinea a day. But that was not the point. The valuer ought to be in the service of the Commission, but in this case he had the right to vote, and upon one occasion he voted, and the vote was carried against the crofters. The Secretary for Scotland said the Commissioners had shown a great deal of energy. He (Mr. Weir) did not think so. No doubt they had to put up with Highland weather, but did they expect always to get brilliant sunshine in the Highlands? Of course, in the ordinary course of things they had to fortify themselves inside and out against the weather, and he saw no hardship in that. The Commissioners showed a distinct lack of energy in the prosecution of their work. Sheriff Brand seemed to him to be too frequently in the South when he should be in the North, and it struck him that Sheriff Brand had too many salaried appointments. He was Chief of the Crofter Commission, of the Deer Forest Commission, and the Sheriff of Ayrshire, and he did not know how many more appointments he held. While this Commission had been sitting the landlords had been increasing the deer forests, and they had been doing so ever since the Crofters Act was passed in that House. The right hon. Gentleman the

Secretary for Scotland and the Lord Advocate both knew that they had been doing so. He did not make the assertion upon his own responsibility that the crofters had been robbed of the land, but he would point out that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian in 1887 referred to the necessity of amending the Crofters Act, which he considered a very imperfect Act, and that Lord Salisbury a fortnight afterwards said that the conditions with regard to the land were very different in the Highlands to what they were in the other parts of the country, and that the Highland crofters ought to have legislation which would enable them to go back upon the land. They knew that the Tory Government was in power for six years, but made no move in that direction. He supposed if they had another six years of Office they would do nothing. He hoped, however, that in this Liberal Parliament they would be able to pass an amended Act during this year. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had said he would support such a Bill if a private Member would move it. But how could a private Member get a Bill through the House? He was very glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland that the work of the Commission was to be forwarded. There was no difficulty in passing the Bill if the Government had a real desire to do so. They had a willing majority, and on their part it was only a matter of will and determination, and then the measure would become law. As to opposition from the other side of the House, that would avail nothing if the Government would only lead the way, and fulfil their promise. The Secretary for Scotland alluded to the evidence given by Sir Colin Moncrieff before the Welsh Commission. He was sorry that so amiable a gentleman as Sir Colin Moncrieff should have shown so much ignorance. He could give his words, in which he showed himself that he was ignorant of the state of affairs in the Highlands, and had, in fact, passed most of his life in other lands. A highly-paid official of the Scotch Office ought not to be allowed to publicly traduce the crofters of the Highlands, especially when he admitted that he knew nothing about

the question. But this was how matters generally affecting the Highlands were treated. As a rule, they were treated with contempt. Was it because the Highlands were so far from the great centre of London? Sir Colin Moncrieff was obliged to state that he had to depend upon Sheriff Brand for his opinion, and he could read other extracts showing how ignorant that gentleman was of the condition of affairs in the Highlands.

MR. A. C. MORTON : Read them all.

MR. WEIR : He would like to read them all. It was a very serious matter that a highly-paid official of the Scotch Office should have made these statements. It was only because the hour was advanced that he refrained from going into many of these matters, but he should certainly bring them before the House upon another occasion. There was much ignorance of Highland affairs exhibited by the Government themselves. The Lord Advocate had shown himself to be ignorant even of Highland geography.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member will see that that does not apply, and is out of Order.

MR. WEIR said, he should have another opportunity of speaking about that matter. He hoped the Secretary for Scotland would take care that this amendment of the Crofters Act, which had been promised so long, would be energetically pushed through, and not staved off, and that the Government would see that full justice was done to the crofters.

*DR. MAC GREGOR (Inverness-shire) said, he wished to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it was true or not true that Sir Colin Moncrieff stated to the Welsh Land Commission that the Government had no intention whatever of increasing the crofter holdings? That, to his mind, went to the root of the whole matter. The rest of the evidence might be pronounced to be matters of opinion. This question ought to be answered by the Secretary for Scotland. If he was in Order he should like under the heading Highlands and Islands—

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It would be more convenient that the Secre-

Mr. Weir

tary for Scotland should answer at this point.

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, his hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough had raised the question which had been raised earlier in the day. He sincerely hoped it would not be necessary for him to repeat the speech which he made earlier in the afternoon. As a matter of fact, it was the custom of the Treasury to make a special payment for professional services. They had done this in the case of engineers and land surveyors and medical men, and in this case they made the special payment of £5 5s. a day to this gentleman when he was engaged upon professional duties. The Commission decided the details, and their recommendations were followed out, and that course enabled them to obtain the services of an able and eminent professional man upon the Commission.

MR. A. C. MORTON: Is there any Commission sitting where there is a similar instance?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: Not sitting, so far as I know. This gentleman, he was told, had done his duty with great impartiality, and had rendered good service. When the hon. Member defined the duties of the Commissioners as a nice holiday, all he could say was that two of the members of the Commission had already suffered most severely from the arduous nature of the work which they had undergone. He appealed to those who knew the Highlands whether considerable discomfort must not have been undergone in the journeys from shooting box to shooting box and hotel to hotel? It was not the fact that the Commissioners wanted to visit a few more places so as to complete their holiday. What they wanted to do was to complete their inquiry. His hon. Friend proposed to reduce the payment for the Deer Forest Commission to express his sympathy with the crofters; but he (Sir G. Trevelyan) did not think that in proposing that reduction and attacking the Commissioners he did not manifest any sympathy with the crofters at all. What the crofters wanted was to get more arable land, and what this Commission was appointed to do was to find out what arable land and pasture land was avail-

able, and by reducing the sum payable to the Commission was not the way to assist the inquiry. As to Sir Colin Moncrieff's evidence, he had been asked—

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: To refer to that evidence would be out of Order.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: What he had said was that they were bringing forward a Bill for the purpose of extending the advantages of the Crofters Act, and that they would do their best to pass it into law.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he did not know that he should press this Motion to a Division, but he must say that it was the only way they had of finding opportunity to speak of these matters by moving a reduction—not that they wanted to take any money from the crofters, because he was sure they did not want to do that. It was done to concentrate the Debate upon a particular matter. He wanted to say that he was not satisfied with the right hon. Gentleman's explanation with regard to the Commission. There was no such official as a paid surveyor upon the Agricultural Commission or the Labour Commission, and one would suppose that large Commissions like these would have had one, if one was needed anywhere. What he wanted to draw attention to was this principle—that it was improper to have a man paid by a Commission who was also a member and had a vote upon that Commission. Upon another occasion he should take the opportunity of calling attention to this matter again.

MR. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland) said, in reference to his having been asked as a member of the Deer Forest Commission to give an explanation of certain doings of the Commission, that he had no explanation to offer, because the Commission had not finished its work, and he would not do anything which would involve a breach of confidence. After what the Secretary for Scotland had said it was not necessary for him to take part in the discussion, and he would only say that he had never been engaged in more arduous physical labours. The late Prime Minister had expounded the policy that was to be pursued with regard to

the Highlands, and had laid down that the survey of the Highlands ought to be made. When they remembered that some Royal Commissions had lasted for 10 years and had cost the country 20 times as much as this Commission, about which they had never heard a word of criticism, he was surprised at the attack made on this occasion. With regard to what the hon. Member for Peterborough had said, that question was debated in the Commission. A vote was taken upon it, and though, he confessed, he was a member of the minority—

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order! It is very irregular to report what has taken place on a still pending Royal Commission.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

*DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire) asked what the Secretary for Scotland proposed to do with regard to the Petitions presented to him on the question of the want of roads and steamboat accommodation in the Islands of Inverness-shire. A great part of that country (Harris) had no roads whatever, and was simply isolated from the outer world. The whole of the traffic across country was carried on the backs of the country people. That was hardly creditable to a wealthy nation like this, which prided itself on being the pioneer of civilisation and Christianity. In heavy rainfalls the children going to school were positively in danger of their lives. People had to walk 10 and 12 miles to post and receive their letters. It was discreditable to our postal system that that should be necessary, and what made the matter still harder was that the mail steamer was positively seen passing regularly two miles from the shore without stopping. When he asked a question on the subject he was told that to do so would be a waste of time, and that the contractor refused unless he was paid for it. It seemed to be merely a question of a few miserable pounds whether or not people should be allowed to get their letters from the steamers. A slight amount of attention at the Scotch Office would suffice for the adjustment of this as a matter of business. He had been promised over and over again by the

right hon. Gentleman that it should be considered. The right hon. Gentleman had also on behalf of the Government promised them an amendment of the Crofters Act this Session. It had been so often promised and so definitely agreed to that he would merely say now that unless the right hon. Gentleman and the Government showed a decided and early indication to introduce and pass such a Bill this Session he should have to reconsider the disposal of his vote in the House. He had a great respect for Imperial politics, but could not forget that there were local as well as Imperial affairs, and he was there to represent a cause which ought not to be neglected. There seemed no reason why the Government having a majority in the House should not carry a Bill on this subject during the Session.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN pointed out that the question under consideration was piers, harbours, roads, and minor works in the Highlands, and not the work of the Session.

DR. MACGREGOR said, he would confine himself to that. He complained that there were no landing-places for the steamers to stop at. How could the people on the coast develop their fisheries unless a few piers or jetties were erected for them? They were sometimes told it was the duty of the County Council to see to these matters, but, on being appealed to, they denied that they had any such power. He did not wish to intrude himself longer than was necessary upon the Committee, but he urgently called upon the right hon. Gentleman to redeem his promises without delay, and not allow the demands of a law-abiding and peaceable population to be neglected in this way. He again called on the right hon. Gentleman to fulfil his promises. Why were hundreds of thousands of pounds given to Ireland for light railways and other things? Was it because they were not peaceable and law-abiding? Why, that was the very way to encourage agitation and law-breaking. If this neglect of the crofters continued, he would not like to be responsible for the Highland people. They were a long-suffering people, but their patience must

Mr. Sutherland

not be taxed too long, and there was a limit to it. The promises of the right hon. Gentleman seemed to be made to be broken—like pie-crusts; but in saying this he did not mean anything offensive. Sentiment, however, must give way to duty, though it was with great reluctance and regret that he had given expression to these remarks.

MR. WEIR said, his hon. Friend had omitted to move the reduction of the Vote, and he should do so to the extent of £100. On Vote 4, Class VII., he wished to make an observation with regard to the cost of administration of the office created under the Highlands and Islands Works Act—one of the most extravagantly conducted offices, he should say, under the sun. There had been expended on piers, harbours, telegraphs, and minor works £4,131, and the administration cost £1,700. It was wrong that so large a sum should be charged for office expenses in connection with so small a capital outlay. It was true that £10,000 had to be expended on steamer communication, but that entailed no further work upon the Department than drawing cheques once or twice a year in favour of the mail-boat contractors. The engineer received a salary of £540, and an allowance of £156 for his clerk; then the clerk of works had £164, and for non-commissioned officers and other charges a sum of £544 was put down. He did not see any practical use in having a clerk of works to expend £1,000; and the cost of £300 for an office appeared to have been incurred for the purpose of finding somebody a job. They had no right to spend £1,700 in that way. The unfortunate part of the business was that £25,000 of the £41,000 granted by the House had gone back, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had put his hand on it. There was plenty of scope for spending the money in the Island of Lewis, where whole districts containing thousands of inhabitants were without an inch of roads either for vehicles or foot traffic, and yet the people had to pay road rates. Why was not the money expended in making footpaths? In severe weather the children were unable to attend school on account of the risk they ran in crossing rough and stony ground, swamps, and bogs. £15,000 was granted two or three

years ago for these purposes, and £6,000 had been spent on a road from Carloway to Stornoway, which was really not required. It was a political job managed by the Tory Party with the view of catching votes at the last Election. However, they did not manage to catch a sufficient number to return their men. He sincerely hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to giving several times the £3,000 which had been mentioned. No doubt it was very difficult to get money out of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but why should £25,000 have gone back to the Treasury? What had been the result? The Secretary for Scotland had said that nothing was wrong in the Highlands, and hon. Members might naturally conclude that the people there were contented and happy and were getting larger grants than they could possibly use, but that was not the fact. The Highlands and Islands Works Act was a faulty measure as the Secretary for Scotland knew, and why did not he get it put right? He had written to the Scotch Office time after time as to works which were badly needed in various parts of the Highlands, and was referred to the County Councils, who replied that they had done all they could, and that the matter rested with the Scotch Office or the Board of Trade. That had gone on month after month and year after year, and it was time such a mode of conducting business was stopped. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, when asked for money for the Highlands, wriggled out of it on the plea that he had not got the money. No doubt times were bad and money was scarce, but he hoped his right hon. Friend would go to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and insist upon having money for these works so much required in remote parts of the Highlands. He would also press upon the right hon. Gentleman the importance of making communications for the Western part of the mainland of Ross-shire with the view of enabling the fishermen to send on to the southern markets the abundant supplies of fish found off that coast. If this sort of thing continued—spending £1,700 to expend £4,000—he would be driven to the conclusion that this was another job. He now moved to reduce the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £5,000, for Highlands and Islands of Scotland (Public Works and Communications) be reduced by £100."—*(Mr. Weir.)*

*SIR G. TREVELYAN said, it might be imagined that there were parts of the country which had been specially singled out for ungenerous treatment, but that was far from being the case. The hon. Member had just stated that £3,000 was given by his Department for making footpaths in the Highlands. It was not £3,000 but £10,000 that was devoted to the purpose, and every penny of it had been spent. It had also been stated that large sums of money were given back to the Treasury instead of being spent for these purposes, and that it was time this mode of doing business was stopped. When charges of that sort were made they ought to be a little closely examined. Undoubtedly the Highlands and Islands Act was a cumbrous measure, and during the first year of its operation the money voted to be spent under it was not spent. But all the money voted for the Highlands and Islands by Parliament last year would be spent. The cost of administration, of which complaint had been made, was imposed by the Act. In the year which was now coming to an end all the money which was voted by Parliament under the Highlands and Islands Act would be spent. Therefore, he did not see that the charge which his hon. Friend brought against the Office had any foundation at all. His hon. Friend proposed to refuse the cost of administration, which, he said, was excessive. The system of administration was absolutely imposed on the Government by the Highlands and Islands Act, and it was necessary to have Inspectors going over the whole of the Highlands and Islands. The hon. Member said a job had been perpetrated. Well, if, as the hon. Member said, there had been a job originally, there was not a job now. An officer with a high salary had gone to perform other functions, and another gentleman had been appointed. So far from there having been a job, he (Sir G. Trevelyan) had not known the new official before he was recommended to him for his professional qualifications, and he had not now the slightest conception whether he was

a Tory, Whig, or Radical. He was recommended by his professional chiefs, and he was appointed as a professional man. A request was made that steam communication should be procured between certain islands, but out of this Vote it was proposed to pay £10,000 for steam communication between the islands. Every six months the contracts were revised, and if, without any increase of expense, some more convenient method of arranging stoppages of steamers could be carried into effect it should be done. He must say that, in the present state of the public finances, this Vote of £36,000, the equivalent of which was not given to any other part of the country, was a very handsome Vote to give for these services in the Highlands. He must say that it was a very poor return for spending money in the Highlands to be told that the money which had been expended on a road in the Lewis at the request of those who were interested had been thrown away. It was desired at the time that the money should be spent for this purpose, and certainly the expenditure was of the greatest service in the district at the time. If the money had been badly spent it was the Local Authorities and not the Government who were to blame. He could not think that it was for the benefit of the Highlands to call on Parliament to reduce the Highland Vote by £100. This seemed to him to be a very poor return for the beneficence of Parliament, and he did not think his hon. Friend would get many Members to vote with him.

MR. A. C. MORTON desired to support his hon. Friend's request for further assistance for harbours of refuge, &c., in the Highlands. His right hon. Friend (Sir G. Trevelyan) knew very well that the moving of a reduction was the only way Members had of expressing their opinion on the subject.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member said that twice on the last Vote.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he would not repeat it. The Vote was £5,000 less than last year, and he thought the Government might have granted as much as last year. If the right hon. Gentleman would take a trip, not in a yacht, but by the ordinary means of communica-

tion, from Glasgow to Stornoway, he would find that there was need for further harbours and piers. The House of Commons could find plenty of money for the Army and Navy, for the Royal Family, for Bechuanaland, for Uganda, and for purposes in which only those who were connected with company promoting took much interest, and he said that under these circumstances a few thousand pounds might be provided for harbours of refuge, roads, piers, and other things that might be necessary for conducting the trade and business of this country, and for increasing the comfort of the people. Radical Members wanted the Government to bear in mind that it was not speculators and company promoters that they had to look after but the great mass of the people of the country. He advised his hon. Friends to keep pegging away at the Treasury and the Secretary for Scotland until they had got the just needs of the people of the West of Scotland attended to. If his hon. Friends would only adopt the tactics of the company promoters they would find that there was plenty of money to be obtained from the Treasury, and of course the money so obtained could not be thrown away on costly expeditions.

MR. W. WHITELAW (Perth) said, it seemed to him that some of the hon. Members opposite were beginning to realise that a certain number of promises which they made to their constituents at the last Election did not appear likely ever to be fulfilled.

*DR. MACGREGOR rose to Order. They made no such promises; the promises they made were *bonâ fide* promises, and not only that, but their action here to-day was not in consequence of the insecurity of their seats.

MR. W. WHITELAW said, if he had offended the hon. Member's dignity he was sorry for it. The hon. Member told the Government that if something more was not done for the Highlands he would not be responsible for the continuance of order in the Highlands. If the hon. Member withdrew his influence for the preservation of order, he (Mr. Whitelaw) did not expect it would cause a very violent outbreak. With regard to the means of communication, he believed

the Secretary for Scotland fully understood more money was required for this purpose than was given, and if the right hon. Gentleman could get more he was satisfied he would do so, and if the right hon. Gentleman had it in his pocket he would give it. So long as they could feel more or less confident the right hon. Gentleman was getting as much as he could out of the Treasury, he did not think it fair to make this sudden and wholesale attack on the right hon. Gentleman's administration of Highland affairs. But he did not think the way to advance the interest of the crofters or the inhabitants of the Highlands was to move a reduction of the Vote that it was proposed to give to the Highlands, and he did not think the electors of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire would be inclined to support their Members who had proposed and supported a Motion to reduce the already too small amount that was to be given.

DR. MACGREGOR: I made no such proposition.

MR. W. WHITELAW said, he spoke of the hon. Member for Ross-shire, and whatever the sentiments of the hon. Member for Ross-shire might be, what he had actually done was to propose that £100 less should be given to this county, amongst others, than the Government was ready to give. He should take care to let all those gentlemen who had been the supporters of the hon. Member in the past understand the position taken up by the hon. Member.

MR. WEIR said, the £100 reduction which he moved was a reduction off the administration expenses, which he took to be excessive. However, in consequence of the promise made by the right hon. Gentleman that the Scotch Office would spend the full amount of the grant this year, he would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he wished to ask one question. He saw there was a sum of £200 noted—

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have put the whole Question, and the Committee cannot go back on any Vote.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow ;
Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [20th March] reported,
and agreed to.—[See page 749.]

Ordered, That the Resolution which, upon the 19th day of this instant March, was reported from the Committee of Supply, and which was then agreed to by the House, be now read.

“That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 155,347, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty’s Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895.”

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army; and that Mr. Secretary Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, and Mr. Woodall do prepare and bring it in.

Bill presented, and read first time.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked whether the Bill would be printed and circulated?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : It will be put down for Second Reading to-morrow.

MR. A. C. MORTON : Will it be printed?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : It never has been printed.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked the right hon. Gentleman to make a change, as it was not fair to move the Second Reading of a Bill that was not printed, and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to have the Bill printed and circulated.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) said, a copy of the Bill could be obtained on application at the Vote Office.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, that if the Bill was anything like the Bill of last year it was highly contentious, and therefore it would be a breach of faith on the part of the Government, who gave an undertaking not to take any contentious business before Easter.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : There is nothing contentious in it.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES remarked that the right hon. Gentleman said the same of the Bill of last year, and he should object as strongly as he could to any contentious business being taken.

Bill to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 116.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolutions [20th March] reported.

1. “That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ended 31st day of March, 1893, the sum of £785 14s. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. “That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895, the sum of £3,918,500 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.”

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolutions.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Sir J. GOLDSMID in the Chair.]

Clause 2.

MR. A. C. MORTON : Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us what the Government are doing, as there is nothing on the Paper about these Amendments?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : Merely inserting the money granted last night for the Navy.

Bill reported, with an amended Title ; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS
(HOUSE OF COMMONS) EXPENSES.

MOTION FOR A RETURN.

MR. A. C. MORTON moved for—

“Return showing detailed receipts and expenditure of Kitchen Committee for the year ending the 31st day of December, 1891, the 31st day of December, 1892, and the 31st day of December, 1893.”

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. T. E. ELLIS, Merionethshire) : I hope my hon. Friend will not move this to-day, but put it down for an early day after Easter.

MR. A. C. MORTON : I shall be most happy to treat my hon. Friend in a more generous way than the Government treated me last night ; therefore I postpone it.

Motion postponed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the rural sanitary district of Waterford, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 115.]

ROAD SUBVENTION ABOLITION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles Cameron, Bill to put an end to Subventions from one road authority in Scotland to another, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Cameron, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Baird, Mr. Robert Wallace, Sir James Carmichael, Mr. McEwan, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Paul, and Mr. Provand.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 117.]

PUBLIC-HOUSES' (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles Cameron, Bill to amend "The Public-Houses (Hours of Closing) (Scotland) Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Mr. Hunter, Sir John Leng, and Mr. Beith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 118.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Courtney, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Bolitho, Sir Thomas Lea, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Brynmor Jones, Colonel Bridgman, and Mr. Alexander Cross.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 119.]

JURY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Williams, Bill to amend and consolidate the Law relating to Juries, and to provide for the payment of Jurymen, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Lloyd Morgan, and Mr. Havelock Wilson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 120.]

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT (1891) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Henry James, Bill to amend "The Factory and Workshops Act, 1891," ordered to be brought in by Sir Henry James, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Mowbray, and Mr. Fenwick.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 121.]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That Mr. Wodehouse be discharged from the Select Committee of Public Accounts.

Ordered, That Mr. Cameron Corbett be added to the Committee.—(Sir J. T. Hibbert.)

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account presented,—of the Gross Amount of all Bank Annuities and any Annuities for terms of years transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, &c. within the year ended 5th January 1894 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(Mr. T. E. Ellis.)

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he wished to make an appeal to the Secretary of State for War with regard to the Army Annual Bill. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to ask that this Bill be read a second time to-morrow, and on being reminded that the Bill was not printed they were told by the Secretary to the Treasury that a copy could be obtained at the Vote Office. He went to the Vote Office, and was informed there that there were no copies of this Bill. That alone, he thought, was sufficient for the appeal he now made to the right hon. Gentleman not to persevere in his intention to read the Bill a second time to-morrow. They had a distinct understanding that no contentious business should be taken before Easter, and so wide was that undertaking that even the First Reading of contentious Bills had been postponed. If the Bill were urgent he should not be disposed to make any opposition even to a *quasi* breach of the undertaking ; but it was not urgent, because last year it only went up to the other House on the 18th of April, and consequently there would be ample time after Easter to pass it through all its stages and send it up to the other House for it to have its effect. On the grounds that they had not got the Bill, that they could not get it, that it was unreasonable to ask them to read it a second time to-morrow, and that a considerable number of Members would be away to-morrow, he would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman not to insist on the Second Reading to-morrow.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The ordinary course has been followed in this matter, and the Second Reading can hardly be opposed, even by the hon. Member. If there is anything contentious it is discussed in Committee, and that stage will not be taken until after Easter, so that there will be ample opportunity to Members to raise any question.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked if, in order to afford a fair opportunity for discussion, the Committee stage would not be taken after midnight?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : That I cannot say.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES : Then we gain nothing, and I shall oppose the Second Reading.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, as he understood it, the right hon. Gentleman would not proceed with the Bill to-morrow, if it was desired that he should not do so. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would by to-morrow put himself in a proper holiday frame of mind, and would treat Members of this House in the same generous manner in which Members had treated the Government with regard to Supply. He was sure that in the interests of the Army they were not doing their duty without thoroughly considering and discussing this Bill, and certainly they ought to be afforded a proper opportunity for discussion. He would not press the matter further now, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be in an Easter holiday frame of mind to-morrow. Before sitting down, he would like to ask the Leader of the House whether he had any further information to give them with regard to the remaining annuity to the Duke of Edinburgh, he meant whether anything had been done in the matter by the Duke and Her Majesty. They would have to take a further opportunity of discussing the subject, but he should be glad if the Leader of the House could give them some further information regarding it.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) said, with regard to the Mutiny Bill, he never heard of any opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill; any changes that were made in the Bill were always discussed in Committee, and he hoped the same course would be pursued now. An ample opportunity

would be given for discussion, and he hoped the House of Commons would not set the example of declining to read the Mutiny Bill a second time. With regard to the annuity to the Duke of Edinburgh, he had to say that he had nothing to add to what his right hon. Friend (Mr. Gladstone) said on a former occasion.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) asked whether it was proposed to legislate upon the Report of the Sea Fishery Committee. The Report of the Committee was practically unanimous, and as the condition of the fishing industry as a source of food supply and a field for producing sailors was most important, he hoped there was an early prospect of legislation. Then with regard to the Conciliation Bill, he trusted the Government would consent to report Progress with the Estimates on Thursday week at an early hour in order to give an opportunity to Members to make their observations upon it.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) asked if the Government would put down the Committee stage of the Mutiny Bill for some early hour?

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he would consider that. They would certainly put down the Conciliation Bill in time for hon. Members to consider it, but he considered it was a new and hostile practice to have discussions on the First Reading of Bills. Both sides of the House agreed in the importance of the Bill, and the First Reading ought to be a matter of course; it was a most hostile practice to discuss a Bill on its First Reading. He thought the Government ought to have the same privilege as private Members, whose Bills were read a first time without comment.

SIR A. ROLLIT said, he heartily supported the Bill, but he understood it was the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion that the Estimates should be postponed in order to take the First Reading of the Bill, and his inquiry was simply as to the time and with a view only to one or two brief and friendly suggestions, based on the experience of the London Conciliation Board, and for the improvement of the Bill.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at half
after Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 22nd March 1894.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

NEW WRIT ISSUED.

For Lanarkshire (Mid Division), *v.* John Wynford Philipps, Esq., Chiltern Hundreds.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

QUESTIONS.

THE SADDLE TENANCY DISPUTE.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) : I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been called to the case of Neil MacDougall, of Saddell, who obtained a decree against his landlord through the Court of Session for the destruction of his house in 1889, but without an order for costs against the defendant; and whether, under these circumstances, the landlord is entitled to detain the amount (£40 *ls.* 10*d.*) on account of costs incurred in his defence, or whether he is bound to pay the money decreed to the plaintiff by the Court, and pay his own costs out of his own pocket?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.) : I have no knowledge of this case, but from the statements in the question it appears to involve a dispute between two private individuals in regard to a money claim, a matter with which I have no power to interfere.

DR. MACGREGOR : Is not the unsuccessful party to an action bound to carry out the order of the Court?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR was understood to reply in the affirmative.

VOL. XXII. [FOURTH SERIES.]

HOUSES OF ILL-REPUTE IN LIVERPOOL.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the Report for the year 1893 of the Head Constable of Liverpool, and to the statement therein that, although during last year 831 houses in that city were convicted as brothels, it has been found impossible, owing to the inadequacy of the present law, to render a single owner or agent of such property responsible for its use, or even for its continued use, for immoral purposes; and whether any representations have reached him from the Watch Committee of Liverpool regarding the urgent necessity for an alteration in the law on the subject, if owners and agents who allow their houses to be used for such purposes are to be made amenable; and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government propose to take immediate steps to remedy the present state of things by the introduction of a Bill on the lines suggested by the authorities at Liverpool or otherwise?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : My attention has been called to the Report of the Head Constable for Liverpool, and the statements in question as to disorderly houses in that city, and I have received a representation from the Watch Committee, which has received careful consideration; and, after consulting with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, I have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to legislate on the subject, as, in my opinion, the law is at present sufficient to meet these cases if properly and rigorously administered.

TRESPASS PROSECUTIONS AT DINGWALL.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he is aware that, in the case of trespass for game tried on 13th February last before Sheriff Hill at Dingwall, in which Baron Middleton of Applecross was the plaintiff, and William Mackenzie, Ardshean, was defendant, the only witness for the prosecution was a game watcher named Macbeath, who admitted that his knowledge of English was very limited, while

Sheriff Hill, who sentenced Mackenzie, had no knowledge of Gaelic; and whether there is any interpreter attached to the Court House at Dingwall; if not, whether it is proposed to engage the services of competent interpreters at those places where Sheriffs are ignorant of the language of the people?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I communicated with Ross-shire when this question appeared upon the Paper, but I regret to have to say that a reply has not yet been received, and I must therefore ask my hon. Friend to postpone the question.

FOOTPATHS IN THE ISLAND OF LEWIS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is now prepared to state the result of his inquiry into the condition of affairs in the Park District of the Island of Lewis, where, owing to the non-completion of footpaths, large numbers of children are unable to attend school during severe weather; and whether he is aware that the children of Grimshader and Cromore have been withdrawn from school for want of footpaths?

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): As I have already stated in reply to the hon. Member, the large proportion of £2,000 out of the £3,000 grant to Ross and Cromarty was allocated to the Island of Lewis. The expenditure of this special grant was entrusted to the County Council, who elected to devote £1,033 to the construction of footpaths to schools, including those at Grimshader and Cromore, in the Parish of Lochs. The responsibility for the proper expenditure undoubtedly rests with the County Council. Upon inquiry, I regret to learn that the present attendance at some of the schools is not so good as it should be, but I fail to see any reasonable cause, as the approaches to such schools are, with the assistance which has been rendered, in a better position than they were last year, and the winter season is over. In the new Local Government Amendment Bill I propose to give power to enable County Councils to construct cart roads, footpaths, and footbridges in accordance with the provisions of the Roads and Bridges Act, 1878.

Mr. Weir

INVERGORDON FERRY.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the Rules and Regulations governing the management of the Invergordon Ferry are disregarded by the lessee; that passengers using the present ferry boat incur great inconvenience and risk; and that the landing piers are in a dangerous condition; and whether it is proposed, in the forthcoming Local Government Bill for Scotland, to provide that this and other ferries, as well as piers, in the Highlands, now in the hands of private individuals, shall be placed under the control of the County Councils?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have not received any representation in regard to the management of Invergordon Ferry referred to by the hon. Member. I propose to deal with the regulation of ferries in the Local Government Amendment Bill.

OVERCHARGES ON THE CHATHAM AND DOVER RAILWAY.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to a case, which is reported in *The Standard* newspaper of 31st January last as having been heard in the Queen's Bench Division, in which a passenger sued the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway for 4s., being the sum charged in excess of the maximum authorised by the Company's Acts between Victoria and Calais on an ordinary first-class ticket, and in which the money was paid into Court by the Company; whether he can state what number of passengers travelled between London and Calais by this route during the year 1893; whether he will take steps, under the provisions of 7 & 8 Vict., c. 85, s. 17, to prevent such overcharge in future; and what are the Acts under the provisions of which the Company's charges are made?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I have seen a report of the case referred to by my hon. Friend. The Board of Trade are not in possession of the necessary information to enable me to reply to paragraphs 2 and 4 of the question. With regard to the legal pro-

ceedings, I am informed by the Railway Company that the case is still *sub judice*, and it would appear from a newspaper report that the Court has made an Order which enables the plaintiff to obtain a decision by a more convenient method than that provided by 7 & 8 Vict. The powers of that Act should only be used in very exceptional circumstances.

POLICE COURT PROCEDURE.

MR. OWEN (Cornwall, Launceston) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the case of "Pridham v. Jennings," heard before the Magistrates at Stratton, North Cornwall, on Monday the 12th instant, where the prisoner, accused of a trifling offence, elected to be tried summarily, and was so tried, pleading not guilty; the Bench disagreed, one Magistrate saying the accused ought to be discharged, and left the Bench, followed by another Magistrate; the two remaining Magistrates committed the accused to take his trial at Bodmin Quarter Sessions, a long distance from Kilkhampton, where the accused and his witnesses live, and without railway communication; and did the Magistrates act within their powers by committing the accused after trying him with his consent under the summary jurisdiction procedure; and, if not, will he take steps in the matter?

MR. ASQUITH : I have inquired into the facts of the case referred to, and find that the circumstances are not quite accurately stated in the question. It is true that the Magistrates at first intended to deal with the case summarily with the consent of the defendant, and that subsequently they determined to commit for trial. I am advised that in so doing the Magistrates did not exceed their legal powers, and that the previous determination to deal with the case summarily does not render the subsequent committal for trial void. It is, of course, a serious irregularity that a man should be committed for trial without the caution required by law being administered to him, and his statement, if any, taken down in writing; but it is open to the prisoner to use in his defence this or any other irregularity by which he may have been prejudiced. I see no ground for interference at the present stage of the proceedings, which will, no doubt, go on in due course of law.

THE PROCURATOR FISCAL OF LOCHMADDY.

DR. MACGREGOR : I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he has seen a copy of the correspondence between the Procurator Fiscal of Lochmaddy and Sir John Campbell Orde, proprietor of North Uist, and his agents, regarding a residence for the former at Lochmaddy; whether he is prepared to take any steps to adjust the matter in dispute; and whether a landlord has power by law to deprive a public official, who must live in a certain locality, of the right to a suitable residence on his estate?

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR : I have seen a copy of the correspondence referred to, and I gather from it that Sir John Orde declines to give the Procurator Fiscal a feu on which to erect a house. This appears to me to be very unfortunate, but the question of providing residences for officials in the Highlands is a large one, and would require legislation, as there is no other way in which a proprietor could be compelled to grant ground for such a residence.

BARLINNIE PRISON.

MR. W. WHITELAW (Perth) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the intention of the Government to build an addition to Barlinnie Prison, to hold 260 prisoners, although there is accommodation for more than that number in the existing prison buildings in Scotland, if prisoners were more equally distributed among the different prisons; and whether, in the interests of economy, he will consider the advisability of utilising existing prisons by distributing prisoners more equally among them, instead of erecting new buildings while existing ones are not full?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : It is not proposed to enlarge Barlinnie Prison beyond the number of cells originally intended—namely, 1,000, that is, 200 more than at present. It is very desirable that prisoners should be detained in their own districts, and frequent removal of parties of prisoners to distant prisons is opposed to the policy of the 1877 Act, and the course hitherto adopted in regard to the re-arrangement of prisons in Scotland.

FINNOR POSTAL FACILITIES.

MR. HAYDEN : I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will explain what is the cause of the delay in establishing the post office at Finnor promised by him last June ?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : The authority for establishing a post office at Finnor, County Westmeath, has been cancelled under circumstances which I recently explained in a letter to the hon. Member for North Westmeath.

RAILWAY FACILITIES BETWEEN DROGHEDA AND DUBLIN.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N. : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, with reference to the Memorial recently presented to him from a considerable number of the inhabitants of Balbriggan and the surrounding district for permission to the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland to run a passenger carriage with a goods train from Drogheda to Dublin, whether he will reconsider his refusal to grant the prayer of the Memorial referred to, in view of the fact that the company are willing to carry out the suggested arrangement, that that arrangement would involve a saving of time and money to a considerable mercantile community, and that a similar arrangement was till recently in force without any injurious consequences in the shape of railway accidents ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I consulted the Railway Inspecting Officers upon the Memorial referred to by the hon. Member, and they were unanimously of opinion that it is most objectionable to attach a passenger carriage to a goods train. I am, in consequence of this advice, unwilling to take the responsibility of acceding to the prayer of the Petitioners. The Memorialists should consider whether it is not more expedient to urge the Railway Company to give additional facilities than to press the Board of Trade to revoke an Order made for the protection of the public.

MR. CLANCY : Does the right hon. Gentleman take into account the character of this railway ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I can assure the hon. Gentleman we are most anxious to do everything we possibly can to meet the convenience of the inhabitants, but

we look on these mixed trains as most dangerous.

MR. CLANCY : But is the right hon. Gentleman not aware of the fact that no accident occurred when a similar arrangement was in force ?

MR. MUNDELLA : A Paper will be laid on the Table showing accidents which have occurred under these arrangements.

MR. CLANCY : But there have been none on this line ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I cannot say that.

MR. CLANCY : If none have occurred, will that alter the right hon. Gentleman's attitude ?

[No answer was given.]

IRELAND AND THE NEW REGISTRATION BILL.

MR. CLANCY : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the new Registration Bill will apply to Ireland, or whether Irish Registration Law will be dealt with in a separate measure ?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : I think it must be the desire of the Representatives of Ireland of all sections that the question of Irish registration should be dealt with in the measure that applies to England, and therefore the President of the Local Government Board will propose to introduce into the English measure a provision for the amendment of the Irish Registration Law. But I do not want to commit myself absolutely on the point.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University) : Upon what ground does the right hon. Gentleman state that this is the desire of all sections of the Irish Representatives ? I am not aware that any opinion has been expressed on the point.

MR. J. MORLEY : I understood that that was so, but perhaps I have misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman and his friends.

MR. CARSON : And the hon. Member for Longford !

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has considered the fact that the Irish Registration Law is totally different from the English and the Scotch, and is most complicated at the present moment ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The complication to which the hon. Member refers is a very good reason for trying to simplify the law. But I think the hon. Member should wait till he sees our attempt, and finds whether our provisions meet the Irish case before he takes objection.

MR. MACARTNEY : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the complication to which I have alluded is the result of attempting to amend the Irish Registration Law in English Acts ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I am not aware of that.

MR. DARLING (Deptford) : I should like to ask whether the Bill will apply to England and to Ireland in the sense that it will establish the doctrine of one vote one value ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The hon. Member must see that the time for raising questions of that kind is when the Bill is brought in.

HILLTOWN TELEGRAPH SERVICE.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will make inquiry as to the desirability of establishing telegraph service with Hilltown, which is an important centre in the County of Down ?

MR. A. MORLEY : The question of an extension of the telegraphs to Hilltown was considered in 1891. It was then found that it would not be remunerative, and it could not, therefore, be carried out except under a guarantee, which was not forthcoming. I shall be glad to make renewed inquiry on the subject, and I will communicate the result to the hon. Member.

FIRING IN HIGHLAND SCHOOLS.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to a statement, contained in a speech delivered at Staffin Skye on the 9th instant by the Rev. Duncan Mackenzie, to the effect that, although the Education Department had decreed the exaction of peats from children attending public schools to be illegal, he had repeatedly during this winter met young children of six and seven carrying peats to school ; and whether he will inquire into this alleged infraction of the order of the Department ?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : The speech to which the hon. Member refers gives

no particulars, and does not state the name of any School Board in the district of which the rule has been contravened. If any such contravention is brought to my knowledge, I shall call the attention of the School Board to the rule.

CULCH ON THE ESSEX FISHING GROUNDS.

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has been informed of the recent collision between fishermen of Tollesbury and those of Burnham, in Essex, who were removing culch from the public fishing ground, to the great detriment of oyster culture thereon ; and whether he is aware that the Crown is the owner of the soil of such ground ; and, if so, whether he will advise the putting in force of the Crown rights to protect the public grounds from such depredation in future ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I have heard with regret of the collision which has taken place between certain fishermen of Tollesbury and Burnham. It has not, however, as yet been possible to ascertain the full particulars of the occurrence and the precise locality from which the culch is alleged to have been taken, but I am making inquiries.

MR. DODD : Assuming that the Crown is the owner of the soil on these grounds, will the right hon. Gentleman enforce the Crown rights ?

MR. MUNDELLA ; I can say no more till I have the details before me.

THE CANADIAN CATTLE TRADE.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the Colonial Department has communicated to him the representations of the Canadian Government as to the freedom of the Dominion of Canada from pleuropneumonia in cattle ; and, if so, whether he will issue an Order forthwith, allowing cattle from Canadian ports to be landed without being subject to slaughter or quarantine ?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, (Essex, Saffron Walden) : I received the Papers to which my hon. Friend refers on Friday last, and I am giving my most careful consideration to the representations by the Canadian Government which

are contained therein. There are, however, one or two matters still upon which I wish to receive information from the Dominion Authorities, and until this is available I shall not be able to say definitely what course it will be my duty to take in the matter. I quite recognise, however, the desirability of my decision being made known at an early date, and I have written to the Colonial Office to ask that I may receive the information in question as speedily as possible.

DR. FARQUHARSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table of the House the Papers relating to this matter?

MR. H. GARDNER: When I have received the answer from the Colonial Office I shall be glad to consider whether the Correspondence can be laid on the Table.

GRESHAM UNIVERSITY DRAFT CHARTER.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill for giving effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Gresham University Draft Charter, or to take any other steps in relation thereto?

MR. ASQUITH: The recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Gresham University Draft Charter are receiving the careful attention of the Government, but the question as to giving effect to them must depend to a certain extent upon the unanimity shown by the different bodies interested in accepting the recommendations.

THE GUBERNADOR ISLAND FATALITY.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government of Marshal Peixoto have given compensation for the deaths of the three British officers who were killed by the deliberate explosion of a magazine on Gubernador Island in November last?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (GREY, Northumberland, Berwick):

MR. Brazilian Government have not hon. Geny compensation, but, as has do every been explained, we have no the conv

H. Gardner

evidence to show that the explosion was an act of deliberation.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Has the request for compensation been refused by the Brazilian Government?

SIR E. GREY: I stated on a previous occasion in this House that the question of compensation would have to be dealt with when the civil conflict in Brazil came to an end. The only addition I can make to it is that we have no evidence it was an act of deliberation.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Are the Government prepared to press this question of compensation?

SIR E. GREY: I have said the question of compensation is reserved to be dealt with when the present civil conflict comes to an end.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Then it is not settled yet?

SIR E. GREY: No.

PAPERS ON SIAM.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the promised Papers with regard to Siamese affairs will be issued to Parliament?

*SIR E. GREY: I can only refer the hon. Member to the statement I made in this House yesterday, and that we are waiting to lay the Papers until we are quite sure the proceedings connected with the alleged murder of a French official has come to an end.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK WITHDRAWALS.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can state the number of Savings Bank withdrawals by telegraph during each month since the introduction of the system, and the average interval between the application of the depositor and the payment of the sum withdrawn?

MR. A. MORLEY: The new arrangements for withdrawing deposits by telegraph from the Post Office Savings Bank came into operation on the 1st December last. The number of withdrawals in December was 1,228, in January 1,446, and in February 1,798, making a total for the first three months of 4,472 withdrawals. In 3,774 cases repayment was required on the same day. The average interval between the application of the depositor and the payment of the money

was 38 minutes in London, and between 50 and 60 minutes for the rest of the United Kingdom.

THE PARLIAMENTARY CHARITY COMMISSIONER.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to whom Questions relating to the proceedings of the Charity Commissioners should be addressed pending the appointment of a Parliamentary Commissioner in succession to the hon. Member for Merionethshire ; and when such appointment is likely to be made ?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) : The appointment of a Parliamentary Charity Commissioner in succession to the hon. Member for Merionethshire will very soon take place, and in the meantime my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council will answer in the House of Commons questions concerning the Charity Commissioners.

THE ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that no copy of the Army (Annual) Bill can be obtained in the Vote Office ; and whether he proposes to ask the House to read a second time a Bill which it has never seen ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : I have ascertained that there are no copies to be obtained, but for the information of the hon. Member I may say—what the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out last night—that the Second Reading stage of the Army (Annual) Bill is exempt from the ordinary considerations. It is a stage which has never been opposed in this House, and I will repeat my promise of last night that the Committee stage will be put down after Easter. That is the proper occasion for making changes in the Bill, and on that stage the matter can be discussed. Copies of the Bill will, of course, be available for hon. Members before that.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES : Inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman proposes to ask us to read a second time a Bill we have not seen, will he undertake that the Committee stage shall not be taken after midnight, but at some hour when there may be adequate discussion ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : Yes.

SEA FISHERIES BILL.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) : I beg to ask if the Government have yet considered the Report of the Sea Fisheries Bill, and when it is intended to introduce legislation ?

MR. MUNDELLA : The recommendations of the Select Committee on Sea Fisheries involve very important principles and also an International Convention, and I am not prepared, in the existing pressure of legislation, to state at present when legislation on the subject can be proposed.

THE IRISH LAND ACTS.

MR. CARSON : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland when he proposes to take the discussion on the Select Committee on the working of the Irish Land Acts ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I quite understand the desire of the hon. and learned Member that this matter should not be rushed. I will undertake that the discussion on the question of the Select Committee will not be taken before the first week after Easter.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : I am sorry to have to ask the indulgence of the House, but I desire to make a statement partly personal to myself and partly affecting the Department which I represent in this House. There is a letter of a very unusual character from a Member of this House (the Member for West Belfast) in *The Times* to-day. I have nothing to do with the first part of that letter, in which he refers to a Motion which stood in his name on the Navy Estimates for Monday and Tuesday nights. He says it was the only one passed over. I may remark that according to the Forms of the House there was only one Motion that could be put. That Motion was negatived. Hon. Members who wished to deal with other Motions duly rose in their place to catch the eye of the Deputy Speaker, but I do not know whether the hon. Member for West Belfast did so, or what measures he

took to call attention to the subject. The Motion was as follows :—

“That, in the opinion of this House, the information given to Parliament by the Parliamentary representatives of the Admiralty with respect to naval matters is misleading and unsatisfactory, and is not calculated either to inform Parliament or to promote the welfare of the Royal Navy.”

The hon. Gentleman, in his letter to *The Times*, says this—

“What I desired to point out was briefly this—that without, I believe, one single exception every answer which has been given to me during the last eight months by representatives of the Admiralty has been absolutely at variance with the facts, has been calculated to mislead the House of Commons and the country with regard to important matters of fact, and has to my knowledge misled and misinformed many persons.”

I think that the House will agree with me that the letter is of an unusual character for any Member of this House to address to a newspaper, and I do not know how many newspapers, with respect to the representative of a Government Department in this House. I am not going to discuss the matter now. I have given notice to my hon. Friend that I intended to take notice of his letter in the House to-day. I am sorry that the notice given was necessarily brief, and that he is not in his place. I wish to say, first of all, that before I give an answer to any question in this House I always endeavour to sift the matter to the bottom and obtain the best information that I can. Of course, I am dependent on the very trustworthy officials of the Admiralty for the information that I give to the House in reply to the numerous questions put down. My hon. Friend alludes specially to an instance of a question which I answered in respect to the Royal Marine Division at Chatham. With regard to that particular instance, I had the advantage, I may inform the House, of seeing the Colonel Commandant at Chatham, and subsequently I saw the Deputy-Adjutant-General of the Royal Marines, and thoroughly satisfied myself that the facts which I gave the House were correct. I saw the Deputy-Adjutant-General of Marines again to-day, and I am able to stand to the answer as not having been misleading, but absolutely accurate from beginning to end. I really do not need to say more than that, except this—that I was perfectly prepared on Monday and Tuesday

evenings to meet my hon. Friend on the subject of his Motion, and if he will do that which I think should be done when an imputation of this kind has been made on any Member of this House, if he will bring the matter forward in the House, I shall be prepared to meet him and substantiate the answers I have given.

SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) : As a matter of indulgence, I should like to say that I am quite sure my hon. Friend did not impute to my right hon. Friend anything personal in the statement he has made as to the information being accurate. I believe he is not in London and has not received the notice forwarded as to this matter being mentioned. When he returns, I have no doubt he will be prepared to offer an explanation, which I hope will be satisfactory.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether in the case of a Motion being brought forward relative to the insufficiency of the answers the right hon. Gentleman would procure an opportunity for discussion?

[No answer was given.]

THE COOTEHILL GUARDIANS AND THE LABOURERS ACT.

MR. YOUNG (Cavan, E.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the majority of the Guardians of Cootehill Union have persistently refused to make a scheme for providing suitable dwellings and allotments under the Labourers Acts; whether several labourers have frequently asked the Local Government Board for an inquiry under the provisions of the amended Act; is the Local Government Board aware that three-fifths of the elected Guardians are in favour of making a scheme; and whether the Local Government Board, after the proceeding of the Guardians on 23rd February, will order an inquiry forthwith?

MR. J. MORLEY : I have been informed that the Guardians of this Union have up to the present time declined to act on representations made to them under the Labourers Acts. Complaints from individual labourers have occasionally been received by the Local Government Board, but it was only during this month that application was made for an inquiry under the provisions of Section

Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth

5 of the amended Act. The Board is not aware that three-fifths of the elected Guardians are in favour of making a scheme, but a proposal for such a scheme was defeated at a meeting of the Guardians by 13 votes to 11. The question of holding an inquiry in the district will, on the receipt by the Local Government Board of certain documents which they require to be furnished with by the Guardians, be considered.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): Is it not the case that in the Cootehill Union, as well as in the Ballyborough Union, there are a large number of non-elected *ex officio* Guardians who are opposed to the administration of these Acts; and will he, taking the serious reports as to the condition of labourers' dwellings in these Unions into consideration, endeavour to increase the number of popularly-elected Guardians?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will direct the attention of the Irish Local Government Board to the matter.

THE DE FREYNE EVICTIONS.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether compensation has yet been paid to those evicted tenants on the De Freyne estate whose goods were confiscated by members of the Constabulary; and, if not, will he direct that no further delay be allowed to take place in the matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy, in reply to a question on the same subject on the 21st of December, stated that inquiry had been directed with a view to ascertaining whether the charges preferred against the police had any foundation in fact. These charges have been carefully investigated on the spot by the Divisional Commissioner, who is the highest officer in the district, and he has arrived at the conclusion that there is no foundation for them. I concur in the opinion that the case against the police has been disproved after examining this officer's Report and the statements made by the persons concerned. It is a fact, however, that one constable was charged with larceny while on patrol duty. He pleaded guilty, was convicted and punished, and dismissed the Force.

THE IRISH CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will grant a Return of the number and names of the persons employed in the High Court of Justice in Ireland who have attained the age limit fixed for retirement in the Civil Service?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have given instructions that a letter be written to the hon. Member stating there would be no objection to a Return of the kind asked for if moved for in the usual way. It will be necessary to substitute for the words following "in Ireland" the words "above the age of 65 years."

MR. HAYDEN: I will make that change.

LOANS TO IRISH TENANTS.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will explain why a tenant farmer in Ireland, the Poor Law valuation of whose holding is £7, could obtain a loan of £50 from the Board of Public Works for the improvement of his holding two years ago, but cannot now obtain more than £21?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): It is true that for a certain period anterior to 1891 a tenant-farmer could have obtained a loan of £50 on a farm valued or judicially rented at £7, but this under conditions. The highest loan permitted since 1891 was £35, or five times the valuation or judicial rent, and a loan to that amount can still be obtained on a £7 holding if one of three conditions is fulfilled, namely: (1) If the landlord postpones rent to the Board's loan; (2) if satisfactory collateral security is offered; (3) if the rent is so low as to be virtually nominal. If none of these conditions are fulfilled, the limit of the loan would be three times the valuation or judicial rent, but, as the minimum loan permitted under the Land Law Act is £35, no loan of £21 could be granted.

MR. SEXTON: Is it not inadvisable that the Irish people should be allowed to suffer owing to the action which the House of Lords have taken. Can the right hon. Gentleman afford the House an opportunity of considering the question?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : We have been anxious to secure an amendment of the law by which the loan could be secured on the holding in view of the possibility of evictions.

Mr. GILHOOLY : Were the alterations made in the conditions under which loans are now granted to Irish tenant farmers sanctioned by any change in the law ?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : The alterations were made on the authority of the Treasury.

THE CONVICT MICHAEL WALSH.

Mr. HAYDEN : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland will he explain why it was that a convict named Michael Walsh was removed in a dying condition from Mountjoy Prison to the Mater Misericordia Hospital, Dublin, about a month since, receiving 15s. out of £3 10s. earned by him while confined, and that he was discharged in prison clothes, which he is still wearing ; whether it is usual to give prisoners civil outfit and all their earnings on discharge ; and, if so, why was this man differently treated ; whether he is aware that this man is anxious to go to his family in America ; whether it is usual to give discharged prisoners means to go to their relatives on discharge ; and will he order that suitable clothes be supplied to this man at once, and that the balance of his earnings in prison be given to him, and that he will be provided with the passage fare to America when sufficiently recovered to undertake the voyage ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : The General Prisons Board inform me that it is not a fact that the convict Walsh was removed to the hospital in a dying condition from Mountjoy Prison. The medical officer of the prison states that on the convict's removal he was quite fit to be removed, though he was suffering from pneumonia. The gratuity payable to him was £3, not £3 10s. as stated in the question, and out of the former amount he received 15s. on his discharge, the custom being to hand to the convicts portion only of their gratuities on their discharge, and to remit them the balance when they have returned home. I think the hon. Member will see that there is some prudence in not paying the full gratuity until the prisoner has returned to his home.

Mr. Sexton

The object of this arrangement is to prevent men suffering from reaction on their discharge after long imprisonment frivolously squandering the whole of their gratuities. He was not discharged in prison clothes, but in an outfit of Irish tweed. He did not say to the Governor of the prison that he intended to emigrate. It is the practice to defray the expenses of the convicts to the place of their arrest or conviction, or any other place which they may select which would not involve greater expense. In the present case, Walsh has not applied for his travelling expenses, but as soon as he does so they will be provided in the ordinary way. The Prisons Board have no funds at their disposal to defray the cost of his emigration to America, but I may add, however, that, in addition to the 15s. given to him on his discharge, the Governor handed over to him a sum of £5 private cash, which, though speaking from memory, I am inclined to think was sent him from America.

LUNATICS IN BELFAST WORKHOUSE.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of additional nurses and officials appointed to the lunatic department of the Belfast Workhouse since 1st November last ; also the number of deaths in the lunatic department since that date, and the number on which inquests have been held ; whether the epileptics are still kept in the lunatic department, and if the Local Government Board has instructed the epileptics to be so kept there ; whether, at a recent inquest on an epileptic who died in that department, held in Belfast, the coroner's jury strongly protested against this practice ; whether he will state by what authority epileptics are placed there, or lunatics kept under restraint in the workhouse ; whether he is aware of the practice of exchanging patients carried on between the workhouse authorities and the Governors of the asylum at Belfast ; and if some inquiry will be made into the whole system in relief of these helpless afflicted persons ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : I regret that I am not in a position to reply to-day to my hon. Friend's question, as I have not yet received from Ireland the Report for

which I have called. Perhaps, therefore, the question will be put down for a future day.

BALLINA LIGHT RAILWAY.

MR. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in the construction of the Ballina and Killala Light Railway, a deviation from the deposited plans has been made—namely, in ending the line and erecting the terminal station at the Killala end, 250 yards short of the point shown on the plans; if so, why the line as constructed has been approved of by the proper authority, and whether that authority will now recall its approval and compel adherence to the deposited plans?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: It is provided in the Second Schedule of the Order in Council, paragraph 3, that the company shall construct the—

“railway in accordance with the deposited plans and sections, as modified by the working plans and sections,” &c.

The line is constructed in accordance with these latter, which have received the approval of the Board of Works. The change of the station site was made because, in the opinion of the Board, the new site was more convenient for the town, more economical as regards construction, and better facilitated the working of the line.

TOWN PARKS IN IRELAND.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the general dissatisfaction in Ireland, particularly in Ulster, with reference to the present state of the law relating to town parks; whether his attention has been called to the decision of the Land Commission in the case of Mrs. Letitia M'Cann, tenant, and the Marquess of Downshire, landlord, wherein the village of Dundrum, County Down, which had a population of only 372 in 1881, was decided to be a town to which the exemption from the benefits of the Land Acts applied; is he aware that the Land Commission had previously decided that Dundrum was not such a town at the passing of the Act; whether he is aware that the Cowper Commission recommended that the exemption should not apply to any town under a population of 5,000, and that the late Government

accepted in the House of Commons, in the Land Act of 1887, an amendment providing that the exemption should not apply where the population was under 2,000; and whether some steps will be taken to preserve to tenants in towns in Ireland their property in such lands held outside the towns? At the same time, I may ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware of the large number of tenants in Ireland whose holdings have been exempted from the benefits of the Land Acts; whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. John Robb, of Belfast, tenant, and the Marquess of Downshire, landlord, where the Land Commission decided to fix an extra rent on the improvements made by the tenant, without any contribution from the landlord, on the ground that such improvements were too good for the holding; and whether the terms of Reference to the proposed Committee will be so extended as to include inquiry into the cases now excluded by the defects of the Land Acts, but which are equally entitled to the benefits which these Acts were intended to confer on all the farmers of Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the Judicial Commissioner is at present absent from Dublin hearing fair rent appeals. There has not been sufficient time to communicate with him in the country since the questions were put on the Paper, and, therefore, I hope the hon. Gentleman will postpone them.

MR. SEXTON: I should wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether cases of the class referred to in these questions would not come within the scope of the proposed Committee to inquire into the working of the Land Acts?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not considered that question, and I would rather not answer off-hand.

BELFAST ASYLUM.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a strong feeling exists among the Governors of the Belfast Asylum in favour of having the asylums of Belfast and County Antrim managed under one Board of Governors, as suggested before the Committee of this House on the Belfast Asylum Bill; and whether, considering the advantages to the patients likely to arise from this course, the Local Govern-

ment Board will take into consideration the advisability of carrying it out?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that at a recent meeting of the Board of Governors of the Belfast Asylum a proposal to consider a scheme for the management, under the joint control of the Town Council and the Grand Jury, of the present city asylum and the new county asylum for Antrim was negatived by 10 votes to 7. Under the provisions of the Belfast Asylums Act (1892), which constitute the city and county separate asylum districts and requires the appointment of separate Boards of Governors, it would not be competent for the Board of Control to sanction the re-amalgamation of the two districts; but the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums, I may observe, are of opinion, so far as their judgment goes, that the amalgamation of the two districts would not be advantageous.

THE EVICTIONS ON LORD DILLON'S ESTATE.

MR. HAYDEN: I wish to ask the Chief Secretary a question of which I have given him private notice. Is he aware that eviction proceedings were commenced yesterday against the entire population on a portion of Lord Dillon's estate in County Roscommon; that although many of the tenants were not in arrears of rent, yet several families were evicted; that three of these families have been refused re-admission even as caretakers; were the police present at the evictions; were the forces of the Crown used for the purpose of protecting emergency-men engaged in throwing down houses; and will the right hon. Gentleman, in order to prevent further proceedings of this kind, endeavour to have the Second Reading of the Evicted Tenants Bill taken before Whitsuntide?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not in a position to give an answer in detail as to the transactions that took place yesterday. I am aware generally that these proceedings were announced, and that police protection was required, and was granted, as the law obliges us to do. The particulars about so many families having been evicted, and so forth, I cannot answer, as there has not been time for me yet to receive any details. The police, I presume, were present at the evictions. The forces of the Crown

have not been used to protect emergency-men in throwing down houses in other cases, nor will they in this. I cannot say whether we shall have the Second Reading of the Evicted Tenants Bill taken before Whitsuntide, but, of course, I shall do the best I can to press the measure forward.

ADJOURNMENT (EASTER).

Resolved, That this House at its rising this day do adjourn till Saturday next, and at its rising on Saturday do adjourn till Thursday, 29th March. That on Saturday, as soon as the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill has been passed, Mr. Deputy Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolution [21st March] reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1894-5 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).

"That a sum, not exceeding £4,199,768, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1895, viz. :—[See page 789.]

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, that although he had no desire to detain the House for many minutes, yet he wished to call attention to one or two matters which he was precluded from mentioning on the preceding day by the Rules of the House. In the first place, he wished to ask his right hon. Friend the new First Commissioner of Works if he would consider the advisability of appointing a Select Committee with regard to the offices in Parliament Buildings. He thought the dining, smoking and other rooms might very well be re-arranged, and if the whole question could be systematically considered by a Select Committee having the plans of the building before it, and if, too, some of those now residing on the premises could be induced to give up their residences, changes greatly in the interest of the general convenience might be effected. Many improvements were required, especially in connection with the Reporters' Gallery and rooms. Some sanitary matters also required attention, and he therefore hoped he would receive a promise that this question should be

considered even if no definite undertaking were forthcoming that a Select Committee would be appointed. The next matter to which he wished to refer was as to the Commission instituted by Act of Parliament in 1812 for the management of business connected with the House of Commons. So far as he could understand, that Commission had not been in the habit of meeting. Certainly it did not, under these circumstances, do much harm, but of course it did no good, and he would suggest the appointment of a Select Committee to deal with the question. There were precedents for this course, such Committees having sat in 1833, 1835, 1836 to 1849, and it need not therefore be suggested that the appointment of another Committee would be an undue interference with the Act of Parliament constituting the Commission. Of course, a very different state of affairs to that existing in 1812 now prevailed. At that time there were many offices which were now non-existent. Officers were allowed to appoint deputies to do their work for them, and there were extraordinary methods of paying them. But that had all now been altered, and simple business arrangements were the rule. But the great fault of the present system was that there was apparently no one who had control over or could answer questions in the House relative to these matters. He wanted to know if the Government would allow a Select Committee to be appointed later on to consider the question? He thought that some of the lower class of officers in the House of Commons—the men at the bottom of the list—were not properly paid at the present moment. This was a matter that ought to be considered, with the view of paying them a little better for the amount of work they did. He had intended to have a discussion upon the appointment of the Kitchen Committee and the nomination of the Members the other night, and he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised that the Motion for its appointment would be brought on at a reasonable hour. As a matter of fact, it had been brought on exactly at 12 o'clock. He found that a Select Committee was appointed to deal with the subject of refreshments in the House in 1849, although the Kitchen Committee was then in existence, and he did not see

why a similar course should not be adopted now. There was, he found, general complaint with regard to all sorts of things. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members might laugh; but if they wanted all the things enumerated, from cabbages to champagne, he could enumerate them for them. He had been asking for some years that the Kitchen Committee should issue a balance-sheet. He had placed a Notice on the Paper on the subject, and the late Chairman (Mr. S. Herbert) of the Committee had told him that he would object to giving any balance-sheet. The Committee made a Report about the end of December, and since then they had not held any further meetings, but had allowed the kitchen and refreshment-rooms to run themselves. He wanted to know why they should not have a detailed balance-sheet. For a number of years the House had been voting £1,000 a year to the Committee, and they were, therefore, entitled to a balance-sheet. But whether they voted money or not, they had a right to an account of the receipts and expenditure of anything connected with the government of the country or the management of the House, with the exception of the secret service. He was of opinion that the Secret Service Fund should cease to be secret, but, however that might be, he wanted to know why the proceedings of the Kitchen Committee should be on a par with the Secret Service Fund. Was there anything that should be hidden or concealed from hon. Members? Was there anything that was wrong going on? His experience of the management of public funds told him that as surely as there was secrecy there was something to conceal. He should like some assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he would allow a Return to be made, whether the Kitchen Committee liked it or not.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I would point out to my hon. Friend that the Kitchen Committee and other Committees do not stand on the same footing as Her Majesty's Government. We are here to be attacked and denounced, and if we conceal things of course it is supposed there is something wrong. That is our mission in life.

*MR. A. C. MORTON: I did not attack the Government. I said the Government always gave particulars.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I would point out that the Kitchen Committee is a gratuitous Committee, whose Members are kind enough to give their services to this House. We are extremely grateful for those services. They do their work, I am quite sure, as well as they can, and when they have taken a great deal of trouble on our behalf I am not disposed to criticise or interfere with them. If a Return is not made I think it is entirely within their competence to deal with the question. The Government, however, are not responsible for the Kitchen Committee or for the viands which they supply. I disclaim all responsibility for the action of the Kitchen Committee, although as a Member of the House and a Member of the Government I wish to tender my thanks to them for the trouble they have taken. As regards the accommodation in the House, my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works will answer my hon. Friend's observations. On the subject of that celebrated "Commissioner," my hon. Friend has at length got hold of the right Minister by the ear. I am the Minister who am the Commissioner. The real truth is that these matters are substantially conducted by the Speaker, the First Lord of the Treasury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There have been no formal meetings, but every matter affecting the officers of the House has to be settled by the three persons I have named. I am not aware myself of any ground for complaint. If the House is dissatisfied with the arrangements made respecting the staff of this House they can deal with the matter when the ordinary Vote is taken. I do not think there is any occasion for any complaint of the kind. I think the arrangement satisfactory, and I am not aware that the majority of Members have any reason to distrust the method by which the present system is administered. If my hon. Friend is, however, able to make out a case for inquiry that is another thing. My hon. Friend apparently has in view a rise of salaries. Of course, he cannot expect the Chancellor of the Exchequer to sympathise with such a proposal.

MR. A. C. MORTON: I only referred to those officers who are at the bottom of the list.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I know nothing myself of any matter in regard to the organisation of the staff of the House which is not satisfactory, and therefore, as at present advised, I cannot see that there is any particular occasion for action.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I came down to the House prepared to answer a question that was to have been put by my hon. Friend the Member for Central Sheffield (Colonel Howard Vincent), and to say that, having regard to the statements made by my right hon. Friend the present President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) last year, and to what, I think, is the prevalent feeling in the House at the present time, I shall be prepared, on the part of the Government, to assent to the appointment of a Committee to consider the general question of the accommodation of the Members of this House. No doubt, that Committee will be able to take cognisance of the points raised by my hon. Friend.

MR. A. C. MORTON: That Committee will have power to consider the whole question?

MR. H. GLADSTONE: Yes, that is so.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, he regretted that the question of the increased grant to the Kitchen Committee had been raised at a time when everybody was anxious to get away. Some time ago a question was raised as to the advisableness of abolishing the "tipping" of waiters in the dining-room. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] He was sorry that anyone should express dissent, because to him and to some others the question was of great importance. He had never known a body of men who lived on "tips" who had anything like manliness or independence about them. When a Sub-Committee was appointed a short time ago it was decided that before a serious attempt was made to abolish "tipping" the waiters should have their wages raised. A deputation then waited upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt), who promised to grant £1,000 in addition to the £1,000 already annually granted, on condition

that the "tipping" system was abolished. The wages of the waiters had since been raised 1s. a day all round, but the "tipping" system still continued in existence. As the condition on which the extra grant was promised had not been carried out, he felt himself justified in joining his hon. Friend in protesting against any increased grant being given from the Imperial Exchequer until that condition had been faithfully and honourably fulfilled. A body of hon. Members continued to tempt the waiters by offering "tips," and some of the waiters had told abominable falsehoods, to the effect that they had not had their wages raised and that they were being made martyrs of. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would say that the extra £1,000 should not be granted unless "tipping" were abolished, he (Mr. Cremer) would be glad to withdraw any further opposition to the Vote. As to the question of a balance-sheet, it seemed to him that when the House voted money for any purpose it had a right to know how that money was expended, and ever since he had been a Member of the Kitchen Committee he had urged that a financial statement should be made by the Committee. This had not yet been done, but he hoped hon. Members would insist upon having it done, especially if an increased grant were made.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he did not see why money should be voted by Parliament to the Kitchen Committee at all. Hon. Members ought to pay the full price for their teas and dinners. The Chairman of the Kitchen Committee (Mr. S. Herbert) two years ago when the question was discussed said he would take the money voted by Parliament and spend it as he liked without giving the House any statement as to how it had been spent. If hon. Members voted money to themselves, as they were doing in this case, an account of the way in which it was spent ought certainly to be given. He hoped the Committee would be able to abolish "tipping" by paying the waiters proper wages. He begged to give notice that when the Vote was taken he should oppose the grant of an extra £1,000. The Kitchen Committee did not tell Members what the money was for.

MR. CREMER : Yes they do. The money was asked for to enable us to

increase the wages of the waiters and to abolish the system of "tipping." My complaint is that the wages have been increased 1s. a day and yet the system of "tipping" still prevails.

DR. CLARK said, the House had never been told what the money was for ; whether it was for wages or whether it was needed because the price of teas had been reduced from 9d. to 6d.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University) said, he desired to call attention to what, as reported, seemed to him to have been a very unprovoked attack by the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) on one of Her Majesty's Judges in Ireland on that day week. The statements of the right hon. Gentleman, which he thought were entirely unfounded, had led to a good deal of discontent amongst many people in Ireland, and were calculated to weaken the administration of the law in that country.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. and learned Member will not be in Order in dealing with that question.

MR. CARSON said, he was sorry he could not refer to the subject, but he would call attention to the administration of the law in the County of Clare, out of which the matter arose. Mr. Justice O'Brien, at the last Clare Assizes, pointed to what seemed to be a very alarming state of facts with reference to the administration of the law in that county. The House was asked to vote a very large sum for public prosecutions in Clare, and he (Mr. Carson) wished to point out that those prosecutions had hitherto proved absolutely abortive for the purposes for which they were instituted. Since the present Government came into Office there had been three Assizes held in Clare. At the Spring Assizes in 1893 seven cases were tried—a very small number compared with the amount of crime there had been for the previous six months in the county. Out of the seven cases there was only one conviction. Mr. Justice O'Brien, referring to this fact, said that the law had entirely failed to bring the offenders to justice in spite of every care and vigilance used to attain the result. On the matter being brought before the House the Chief Secretary for Ireland made some very disparaging remarks about Mr. Justice O'Brien. He (Mr. Carson) rather thought the right hon.

Gentleman afterwards regretted having made those remarks. It must be remembered that Mr. Justice O'Brien was the one Judge in Ireland who, owing to the arduous duties he had had to perform, was obliged to have police protection. It was to be deprecated that a Cabinet Minister, a Minister of the Crown interested in the administration of the law in Ireland, should in any way lend himself—even assuming there were any grounds for so doing—to an attack on a Judge under such circumstances as these. This Assize passed over, and the Summer Assizes came on when the trials were before an entirely different Judge. He had not the figures before him of what took place on that occasion, but in the Summer Assize of 1893, so far as he could recollect, there was not, in any important case, any conviction, and Mr. Justice Gibson said that in trying cases there they were engaged in a solemn comedy, and that such a travesty was perfectly melancholy. At the Assizes which had just closed Mr. Justice O'Brien said that—

“It was not possible to bring any criminal case into that county without it resulting in open contempt of the law.”

The net result of these three Assizes at Ennis was that there was no important conviction, and only three altogether. It might be said that he had omitted to mention that at Cork, under the Winter Assizes Act, there had been 11 Clare cases and seven convictions. But what did that prove? It proved that when they had a change of venue and tried Clare cases elsewhere, they got a fair percentage of convictions, and he could not understand a stronger argument for putting in force those powers of change of venue which still existed than the argument that at the recent Winter Assizes at Cork they got seven convictions out of 11 cases, because the cases had been taken from the intimidation that existed in the County of Clare. He thought that when the Judges in Ireland were bold and free enough to draw the attention of the Executive of the country to the failure of juries to carry out the law, which, he said, came within the duty of the Judge—when they had the courage and boldness to do this, and had the manliness to discharge their duty, so far from being met with any opprobrium from those who were entrusted with the supervision of law and order, they ought to receive the

commendation of those who were in high quarters. He could not imagine anything more likely to lead to a recrudescence of crime or to disrespect of the law than attacks on Judges, and the right hon. Gentleman would best consult his own dignity and the material welfare of Ireland if, instead of attacking Judges when they were compelled to draw attention to the failure of Juries to do their duty, he would back up the Judges and try to find some method by which crime might be punished and the law respected.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The hon. and learned Gentleman has so concluded his remarks that I have no right to complain in any way; but I say, in what the hon. Gentleman has had to say about Clare, I really fail to see what point he has brought against myself or Her Majesty's Government. He evidently intended to refer to a remark or two which I had occasion to make on the Charge of Mr. Justice O'Brien the other day, but into that we are not allowed to-day to go. The hon. and learned Gentleman has gone over ground which has already, I should have thought, been abundantly traversed ever since the present Government came into Office; the state of Clare has received more attention from this House than almost any other factor in regard to the condition of Ireland. I think there were four or five elaborate Debates on Clare last year, and I do not think the hon. and learned Gentleman has adduced one single new consideration throwing any light whatever on the attitude the Government ought to take up. I have not by me the figures as to the convictions in the County of Clare, but I will take the hon. and learned Gentleman's account as substantially accurate. It is no doubt lamentably true that out of the total number of offences of a certain kind committed in the County of Clare very few persons are made amenable. It is further true that at the Winter Assizes at Ennis, in the County of Clare, there have not been as many convictions as the Crown would desire, or as any impartial person might have hoped for, but, if my recollection is right, the four cases in which the jury failed to convict were not cases of that particular crime as to which, as the hon. and learned Gentleman knows, miscarriage of justice almost systematically occurs. I believe I am right in

this. The hon. Member talks of the prosecutions that have been proved abortive since we came into Office, but I believe I should have no difficulty in showing, if I had the figures by me, that we have been as successful in securing convictions in the County of Clare, that we have obtained as good a percentage as was the case with the late Government.

MR. CARSON: We never got any in Clare, and gave up trying them there.

MR. J. MORLEY: Well, I will take my own ground, and that, if I may say so, is the ground on which I take the liberty of quarrelling with the line taken by the learned Judge at Ennis. It cannot be denied that the state of Clare has since December last shown a marked and decided improvement. Now, the learned Judge seemed to deny that proposition, and I would undertake to say that there is not a single man of authority and responsibility in Clare, beginning with the Lord Lieutenant of the county himself, and ending with the humblest private constable, that there is not one person with the means of judging and forming a responsible opinion, who would not tell you that the state of Clare shows a decided and remarkable improvement. In the month of December there were only four agrarian offences in the County of Clare. I do not make any boast of that. I never like to make any boast about Clare, because there might be a recrudescence of crime in Clare next month or the month after; but what I complained of was, that instead of congratulating the county on the improvement that had taken place, and which had undoubtedly taken place in Clare during the last four months, instead of congratulating the Grand Jury on the position of the county or of saying nothing about it, the learned Judge unfortunately thought it his duty to represent the state of the County of Clare as rather showing no improvement. I say it is not the duty of a Judge going Assizes to express opinions upon the general social state of the county, when those opinions are in entire disaccord with the views of those who are responsible for what goes on, and whom, I contend, from the Lord Lieutenant of the county down to the humblest private constable, will show there has been a marked improvement. The hon. and learned Member made some remarks in vindication of Mr. Justice O'Brien himself. I have nothing to say

against those remarks; he is the last Judge on whom I would wish to pass any hostile criticism; but when the hon. and learned Member says we ought to be careful in criticising the action of Judges bold enough and free enough to express their opinions, and that when we do that we are tending to disparage the administration of the law, then I distinctly and diametrically differ from the hon. and learned gentleman. There are many Judges on the Irish Bench who dislike and condemn these general social Charges, and think that a Judge would do far more to bring the administration of the law into respect if he steered as clear as he possibly could of disputed ground and political controversies. It is the Judge who imports into his Charge, which ought to be cold and judicial, political considerations, and who identifies the administration of the law with a certain set of political opinions which tends to make the administration of the law suspected and disregarded. I do not think I have passed over anything calling for a reply. If it had been in Order, I should have been prepared to justify every remark I have made, by reference to chapter and verse upon the Charges of Irish Judges.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said, that yesterday he had, by the Rules of the House, no opportunity of referring to matters which he wished briefly to deal with. The first matter had reference to the Fishery Board. It would be in the recollection of the House that the question of trawling off Ross-shire and the Island of Lewis had been brought up time after time during the existence of the present Government. He had brought it forward himself, and had been told there was no money in connection with this work. The fishermen had been told that they ought to report any trawlers they might see to the official of the Board at Stornoway. But how could these men be expected to walk 30 or 40 miles? A gunboat, the *Foxhound*, had been sent, which could steam only six or seven knots, while the trawlers could go at 12; and, moreover, it lay in Stornoway Harbour for weeks because it could not face the weather, which, however, did not keep the steam trawlers idle. Last year he found that £1,400 odd was returned to the Treasury by the Fishery Board, and he hoped that the Secretary for Scotland would this year take care

that the whole of the money granted was expended in connection with the work of the Fishery Board, and mainly in connection with trawling. He wished also to refer to the Board of Supervision. A few years ago the Secretary for Scotland admitted it was a very unsound and badly-managed Board, and required new construction. He would like to know whether anything had been done in that direction, or was it going on in the same sluggish fashion. He would also like to know whether Sir Donald McNeil was connected with the Board, and whether he was not the same man who associated himself very actively, two or three years ago, with the colonisation scheme, which was a scheme promoted by commercial speculators? He would not, however, deal further with the Board of Supervision, which was a very unsound and a very corrupt Board to-day—[*Cries of "Oh!"*] It was shockingly bad, and so corrupt that the right hon. Gentleman spoke of it in that manner.

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): No, never.

Mr. WEIR said, the right hon. Gentleman admitted that it was unsound and badly managed.

Sir G. TREVELYAN: But you said corrupt.

Mr. WEIR said, that if the right hon. Gentleman did not say it was corrupt he (Mr. Weir) did. Then there was a very large item for law charges. When he had spoken on these in connection with Highland matters, the Lord Advocate had shown the greatest ignorance of the geography of the Highlands. When he showed that a man had to travel on foot, in connection with a poaching case, from 30 to 35 miles to Dingle, and the same distance home again, the right hon. Gentleman persisted in saying it was only a distance of six or eight miles. He would really appeal to the Government to furnish the right hon. Gentleman's Office with an ordnance map, in order that these stupid blunders might not be made. Further, he had occasion to ask what number of Gaelic-speaking Sheriffs, Procurators Fiscal, and other officials there were in the Highlands; he asked for a Return, and was told it was not in the public interest that it should be supplied. What was there that it was necessary to keep dark? But he had obtained the

information in spite of the right hon. Gentleman, though he did not think that Members of the House should be called upon to spend their time, their energies, and their money in getting information that was available to the Departments of the Government. He hoped that the Lord Advocate and the Secretary for Scotland when other appointments were made of Sheriffs in the Highlands would take care that Gaelic-speaking men were appointed, and that Edinburgh advocates should not be pitchforked into these posts by the Lord Advocate, men who had no knowledge of Gaelic or of the customs of the people of the Highlands. He did not think it was right that the Highland people should be treated in this manner. Perhaps to-day he might get some explanation as to the case of John MacLean. This was an old man who was 80 years of age, and on the 19th of July last he was charged with allowing trout to get into his net. [*Laughter*]. It was not a laughing matter. If the trout was earmarked as the property of the landlord, then the fisherman could give instructions for it to keep out of his net. This man was not summoned to Dingle, a distance of 30 or 35 miles, until winter time, and that could only be in order that he might be convicted in his absence, as it would be impossible for him to walk that distance in the winter. That was how the Lord Advocate allowed these matters to be conducted in the Highlands of Scotland. He found that three of the Sheriffs received £450 for services to the Board of Supervision.—he supposed £150 each—and he wished to know why they were on the Board of Supervision at all, when what was wanted were men with a knowledge of sanitary matters, and not lawyers? Talk about tipping in the dining-room of the House of Commons! why tipping was carried out by the sanction of the right hon. Gentleman to an alarming extent. Even the fiscals were paid by salary and commission. What did they get commission on; was it the number of convictions they managed to secure, or what was it? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would tell them what they paid these Commissions for? The whole system, it appeared to him, of the administration of the land in the Highlands was one of trickery and jobbery.

*Sir G. TREVELYAN was certainly surprised that any gentleman should

have accused him of having charged the Board of Supervision with being corrupt. He should have as soon expected to hear Mr. Speaker rise in his chair and charge the officers of this House in being corrupt. He never used, with regard to the Board of Supervision, any of these adjectives. He said that the members of the Board of Supervision did their duty with great knowledge, experience, zeal and energy, but that the system was one which was not well organised, and that he intended to alter the system by a Bill which he proposed to introduce on Monday week next. The hon. Gentleman referred to the want of protection against trawling in the Western Highlands. But in England there was no protection at all. In Scotland that sort of protection existed, but was deficient in quantity. In no case could they expect to have a gunboat, or steam launch, or police launch, every 20 or 30 miles along the coast so as to obviate the necessity of the fishermen keeping their own eyes open, so as to report illegal trawling to the ministers of justice, who existed for the purpose of receiving complaints of private individuals on land and sea alike. It was not the case at all that this system had failed in being efficient, because quite recently a fine of £50 was inflicted on a trawler in these seas, and any case brought before a Procurator Fiscal would be looked into carefully. It was quite true that a sum of money had been taken to provide an additional steamship for protective purposes this year, but it was impossible for him to break through the well-recognised financial system under which the Government was carried on, and because there was £1,300 or £1,400 unexpended on a Vote of £20,000 or £30,000 to seize that money, and utilise it for a purpose quite different to that for which the money was obtained. As regarded the complaints of the hon. Member about justice in the Highlands, he did not know even what the hon. Member meant. He had no notion what the hon. Member meant by saying that Sheriffs, Deputy Sheriffs, and Procurators Fiscal lived by the process of tipping and pilfering. When he knew that he would inquire into the matter, but until then he should not do the Sheriffs and Procurators Fiscals the ill compliment of defending them against the accusation of tipping and pilfering. His own belief

was that the general administration of justice in the Highlands was, on the whole, trusted by the great mass of the population, and to their judgment he left it.

Resolution agreed to.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 116.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he did not wish to oppose the Bill, but he did wish to say that his right hon. Friend promised that the Bill should be obtainable in the Vote Office before—

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I have explained that.

MR. A. C. MORTON was aware of this, but was not satisfied with the explanation that had been given. It was all very well to say they ought to allow the Bill to be read a second time without Debate. As he understood it, the Bill concerned the comfort especially of the private soldiers, and whether the Government liked it or not they would be compelled in the future to take more notice of the comfort and convenience of the private soldiers than they had done before, because even if the soldiers could not vote their friends could. Now that the franchise had been extended the friends of the soldiers would take more interest in such questions, and would insist that in future the soldiers should be better looked after. As the Bill largely concerned their welfare, comfort, and perhaps even their lives, they ought, before the Second Reading, to know if the Bill contained any new matter.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : My hon. Friend has asked me whether there is any new matter in the Bill this year. There are only two or three Amendments of a purely verbal kind, merely of this nature—to insert the year 1893 instead of the previous year where reference is made to some previous Act of Parliament which was altered last year. There is just one exception to these verbal Amendments. My hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh brought forward a Motion last year enabling soldiers to be assisted by counsel when they were tried before District Courts Martial. I have promised to introduce a

word or two in order to carry out that which was obviously the intention and the wish of the House. That is entirely in the direction of extending the comfort and welfare of the soldiers, so that I do not think the hon. Gentleman will object. That is the only alteration. The main point is this—this is a Second Reading which affirms the principle that the law is to be applied to a certain number of soldiers and marines of the numbers voted by Parliament. The question before the House is the principle of the Bill. When we come to the Committee stage my hon. Friend may raise any objection he likes, but this is not the time to do so.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES did not think, after the undertaking which had been given that they should have a proper opportunity of discussing the Bill on the Committee stage, that there should be any opposition to the Second Reading. At the same time, he did not quite agree that the Second Reading of a Bill of this kind should be considered absolutely a matter of course.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I did not say so. If the hon. Gentleman objects to applying military law to the whole force of the Crown, that is the point.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, it was, of course, rather a serious matter, because it deprived nearly 250,000 of our subjects of their civil rights. He did not say it was not a thing to be done, but it was a serious thing, especially in the case of a Bill the Second Reading of which was to be passed *sub silentio*, and which had not yet been printed. He thought, however, that upon this occasion the Bill should be allowed to pass the Second Reading in consideration of the undertaking that in Committee there should be a proper opportunity of discussion.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 29th March.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL

ORDERS (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Walter Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Bristol, Dover, Henley-upon-Thames, Idle, Nottingham, Padham and Hapton, Tunbridge Wells, and Wells (Somerset), ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 122.]

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Saturday.

House adjourned at ten minutes after Four o'clock till Saturday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, 24th March 1894.

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said, he had a few remarks to make relative to the Ordnance Vote. He hoped the Secretary for War would take care that in the future some substantial alterations were made in the magazine rifle (Mark I.) and not the miserable changes which he had indicated in answer to questions in June last. He was sorry the Secretary for War had no technical and practical knowledge of this work. If he had possessed that knowledge he certainly would not have described as alterations the miserable changes that had been made in the rifle, and he would have realised how necessary it was to reduce the friction now so marked a feature in some parts of the rifle. He questioned whether the magazine rifle was made as cheaply as it might be. The system of maintaining two factories, each only partially working, was extravagant. Irrespective of the double charges for establishment, rifles could be made more cheaply at Enfield than at Birmingham, and he therefore

suggested that the factory at Enfield should be kept in full operation, and that that at Sparkbrook should be used as a reserve factory. Why was the Sparkbrook factory being maintained, and how was it that an order for 15,000 magazine rifles had recently been sent there? Was this a sop to Cerberus? Hitherto hon. and right hon. Members for Birmingham had been very loquacious in regard to the Sparkbrook factory? Was there now a conspiracy of silence? People would have their opinion as to that, and would be asking, Were the Members for Birmingham masters of the situation? Was the War Office controlled by the Cabinet or by the Members for Birmingham? If by the Cabinet, then why were not the magazine rifles made at the factory where the expense was the least? They ought to have only one factory—that at Enfield. It might suit the Secretary for War to send the work to Birmingham, but it would not suit the taxpayers. It was not business; but he was not surprised at that, as the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had no commercial experience. Again, he hoped the Bagot Street repairing shop would be closed, and he must ask how it was that 54,000 rifles were to be sent there to be “browned.” That, surely, was not the work of a repairing factory. Now he came to the Navy. He was glad to see present the Secretary to the Admiralty, who was about to engage an additional number of men for his Service. He wanted to impress upon him that he ought not to gather these men from the slums of our great cities. There were many men available for the Service who were, so to speak, “to the manor born”; they were men born on our sea coasts, and he thought it very regrettable that the Admiralty should lose sight of such a magnificent recruiting ground as was presented by the Island of Lewis. If they would only send training ships there they would get the best possible material for the Navy, and officers and men could do good work, instead of wasting their time at Sheerness or Chatham, or in some of the Mediterranean ports. It would be far better to send them North, where they would breathe fresh air. The officers might not be invited to so many balls and tennis parties, but they would become very much healthier, and would be all the more fit for work if

ever required for active service. Now, he understood that the Marines had not yet been provided with the Martini-Henry rifle. Why was that? Surely they ought to have the best possible weapon, seeing that they formed part of our first line of defence. When our new ships were completed and sent out to show the greatness of this great Empire we hoped the crews would be properly armed, and that officers and men would not be allowed to spend their time in idleness. They were told that a certain personage was strolling about finding mischief for idle hands, and he was sure his right hon. Friend would not encourage that. Let him, then, see that the men did not waste their time in southern ports while their ships were rotting in harbour, and let him send them on cruises in the Northern Seas, which would keep them fit for work and the machinery of their ships in proper order. They might, too, be supplied with Maxim guns to deal with the sea thieves who so infested the Northern Seas.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he had one or two observations to make. [*Cries of “Oh!”*] He should like to take this opportunity of congratulating Ministers on the improvement which he saw had taken place. He never saw so many Ministers attending Prayers before. This question between Sparkbrook and Enfield had been before the House previously, and it was found that the rifles could be manufactured at Enfield for much less than at Sparkbrook. That had been proved. He did hope that, after having gone to the expense of building most splendid works at Enfield, the Government would make the best and most use of them. In this £10,000,000 there was included part of a very large increase in the National Expenditure—between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000. They had not had any proper time to debate that, and he did not suppose they would have very much opportunity during the Session. He always noticed that when the Government had got the money there was not much time given for discussion. The Government had not actually got this money yet, and he hoped that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed means to produce it, he would take care that it was not to be dragged out of the pockets of the poorer classes of the United Kingdom, but that the incidence of taxation would be fairer in the future than in the past. This

was not a matter that he wanted to detain the House upon. [*Cheers and cries of "Oh!"*] It would be well for hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to remember that these cheers were very much out of place. Hon. Members if they liked could take this opportunity of making their remarks. They had a right to take an opportunity which was given to them by the Constitution of the country, of the House, and of the Government, as the guardians of the rate-payers' money, to criticise the proposals of the Government.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The hon. Member for Ross-shire and the hon. Member for Peterborough have seized this opportunity, to the obvious inconvenience of Ministers and Members and the officials of the House, to bring up certain subjects for the discussion of which there has already been abundant opportunity during the week or 10 days that have elapsed since the beginning of the Session and for the discussion of which there will be ample opportunity hereafter. I cannot conceive anything less convenient than the course which has been taken. I, of course, have had no definite answer at this moment that I can give to the hon. Member for Ross-shire that can be supported by facts and figures on the subjects which he has brought forward. With regard to the magazine rifle, the hon. Member has said that I have no technical knowledge. It is a very good thing that I have no technical knowledge, because this is a matter in which a little knowledge is a dangerous thing—as we sometimes see exemplified. All I can say of the new rifle is that, in the first instance, it has the whole approval of those skilled technical men who conduct the Government manufactories, and, in the next, that in practice it has been found to work well, and to answer all the necessary requirements in the hands of the soldiers who use it. I rely upon the opinion of these two classes of men who have technical knowledge in separate ways, and I am bound to say that, as they do not point out any serious faults, I am willing to accept the weapon as a satisfactory one. As to the matter of the Birmingham manufactory, we had that discussed only two or three days ago. My right hon.

Friend who sits behind the hon. Member knows what has happened with regard to it. There is a possibility of further discussion when the Army Estimates come on at a later period, and I do not think it necessary to delay the House upon it now. I may say the same with regard to the points raised in regard to subjects with which the Secretary to the Admiralty has to deal. He will be ready to answer any point at a proper time other than at the present. To-day we have met to pass the Third Reading of this Bill, and Members having come here at great inconvenience—not Members of the Government only, but other Members—to discharge that duty, and being anxious to do that, and having the one desire to get away as soon as possible, I am sure I should be ill consulting their feelings if I said any more now.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Whereupon, in pursuance of the Order of the House of 22nd March, Mr. Deputy Speaker adjourned the House until Thursday 29th March without Question put.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock, till Thursday, 29th March.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 26th March 1894.

ADDRESS.

The Queen's Answer to the Address of Monday the 12th instant reported; and Address and Answer to be printed and published.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order), and dispensed with for this day's Sitting.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; Then Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been dispensed with) Bill read 2^a; Committee negatived; Bill read 3^a, and passed.

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, Three o'clock.

Mr. A. C. Morton

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 29th March 1894.

COMMISSION.

The following Bill received the Royal Assent :—

Consolidated Fund (No. 1).

House adjourned at half-past Three o'clock, on the 29th April, next, at a quarter-past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 29th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition :—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, without any Amendment.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—

The House went;—and being returned :—

ROYAL ASSENT.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to;—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1894.

QUEEN'S SPEECH.

The Vice Chamberlain of the Household reported Her Majesty's Answer to the Address as followeth :—

"I thank you for your loyal and dutiful Address.

You may rely on My cordial co-operation in your endeavours to promote the well-being of My people in all parts of My Dominions."

QUESTIONS.

IRECHEATER RAILWAY FATALITY.

Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) : On behalf of the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the inquest, on 8th March, on the body of a platelayer, named Cross, who was knocked down and killed at Irecheater, on the Midland Railway ; whether he has observed that it appears from the evidence that a curve in the line and a bridge prevented Cross from seeing in time the engine which struck him down ; whether previous accidents of a similar character have occurred in the same locality ; what precautions are taken on the Midland line for the protection of platelayers under such circumstances ; and whether he will have an inquiry made by a Board of Trade Inspector into the circumstances ?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MURDOCH, Sheffield, Brightside) : My attention has been called to the accident in question. I understand that the railway is on a slight curve only, the radius being 70 chains, and that there is no bridge or other obstruction to the view of the line in the direction of Bedford for the distance of about 400 yards from the point where Cross was working. The Midland Company have Rules for the guidance of their servants, and one of them (347) is specially directed to men working on the permanent way. A coroner's inquest has been held, and the coroner reports that a jury of practical men, one of whom had been an engine driver, returned a verdict of accidental death. The Board of Trade have been in communication with the Railway Company on the matter, and I have come to the conclusion that further inquiry would not throw any additional light on this sad occurrence.

THE CHARITY COMMISSION.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Noits, Mansfield) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education when Mr. Austie ceased to act as a Charity Commissioner; and whether, by the terms of his appointment, he was appointed as a permanent Commissioner, or only as a temporary Commissioner in connection with the administration of "The City of London Parochial Charities Act, 1883"?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) : I am informed that Mr. Austie ceased to act as a Charity Commissioner on the 30th of September, 1892, being the day on which the extended period prescribed by the City of London Parochial Charities Act, 1883, for the duration of the powers and duties vested in, or imposed upon, the Charity Commissioners by that Act, expired. Mr. Austie was appointed a Charity Commissioner under the power, given to the Crown by the above-mentioned Act, of appointing paid Charity Commissioners to hold office during the pleasure of the Crown, and his salary as Commissioner ceased to be paid on the expiration of that Act as thereby provided.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, with reference to the recent Return of Charities within the County of London, the trustees of which have omitted during five years to transmit to the Charity Commissioners copies of the annual accounts of the charities as required by law, whether the Commissioners have taken any, and what, steps to obtain compliance with the law; and whether any, and what, steps have been taken by the Commissioners in the case of numerous trustees of charities in other parts of the Kingdom who, during the same period, have omitted to transmit copies of their accounts to the Commissioners?

MR. ACLAND : I am informed that the Charity Commissioners have taken steps to procure the Return of the accounts of the charities in question, and have already received the accounts in several cases; and that in every case in which such an omission is brought to

the notice of the Charity Commissioners a compliance with the law is at once required and enforced.

MILITARY INSTRUCTION FOR VOLUNTEER OFFICERS.

MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that great difficulty has recently been placed in the way of Volunteer officers, who are anxious to make themselves efficient, at Wellington Barracks, Hythe, and other Military schools; that one officer of the 1st Volunteer Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment, who applied early in February for admission to Wellington Barracks in March, was refused on the ground that the school was full in March, and on subsequently applying for April was informed that in April there would be no school at all; and that another officer in the same regiment, who applied last December for admission to the School of Musketry at Hythe for any month in 1894, was refused on the ground that there were no vacancies at Hythe in 1894 at all; and whether he will consider the possibility of giving increased facilities to Volunteer officers of obtaining military instruction?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : Referring to the specific instances quoted, the officer who wished to attend at Wellington Barracks in March, when there was no vacancy, has been informed that he can attend the April class. At the Hythe School of Musketry the only vacancy available in 1894 for the Militia and Volunteers of the Thames District was filled before this application was received. Speaking generally, the numbers which can be taken at the several Schools are necessarily limited; but, subject to those limits, there is every desire to afford Volunteer officers all possible facilities for making themselves efficient.

SEA FISHERIES.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has yet considered the Report of the Sea Fisheries Committee; and whether, and when, he intends to propose legislation in pursuance of its recommendations?

MR. MUNDELLA: I regret that, having regard to the number of measures proposed by the Government, I am unable to promise legislation on this subject at present.

STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the proposed Committee on the structure and arrangements of the House of Commons will have power to inquire into the want of proper accommodation for Representatives of the Press?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): Yes, Sir.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON COMMISSION.

SIR A. ROLLIT: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, and when, it is intended to propose legislation in pursuance of the Report of the University of London Commission, and what will be the general character of procedure in reference to the subject?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby): It is impossible to introduce legislation in pursuance of the Report of the University of London Commission this Session.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER AND THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY—PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the indulgence of the House while I make a very brief personal explanation. On Thursday last the Secretary to the Admiralty made a reference to me in this House. It would be quite out of place for me to go into the subject-matter of that statement. I wish, however, to say that my absence from this House was a misfortune which no one regretted more than myself. I recognise the courtesy of the Secretary to the Admiralty in giving me notice of his intention; but owing to what was perhaps the necessarily short character of that notice, I did not receive it till the following morning. I desire nothing better than to have an opportunity of stating my case before this House, but I fear from the reply given to the hon. Member for King's Lynn by my right hon. Friend that I shall not be

allowed such an opportunity. I must, therefore, endeavour to state elsewhere what I should have preferred to state in this House. I may add that, despite the very categorical statement made by the right hon. Gentleman, I still find myself so sharply at issue with him that I do not feel justified—taking the view I do of what is the public interest in this matter—in allowing a misunderstanding of this kind to remain unexplained. I can only repeat, as my right hon. Friend seems to think otherwise, that this is in no sense a personal matter with me, and no hon. Member can point to a word of mine which justifies such a belief. I thank the House for its indulgence in hearing me, and I trust I have made it clear that it is by no wish of my own that I failed to support the exact terms of my Motion.

THE ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): Is it proposed to take the Army (Annual) Bill to-night? If so, after what hour will it not be proceeded with?

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked if there was not a distinct understanding that up to the 29th of March no contentious business should be brought forward, and if the Secretary of War had not violated that understanding before Easter by getting the Second Reading of the Army (Annual) Bill without notice and before the Bill itself had been printed? He further inquired whether the Government really intended that night to proceed with this most contentious piece of business before hon. Members had had an opportunity of putting down Amendments to it?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN replied, that if there was any general feeling in the House, or any feeling at all, against the Committee stage of the Army (Annual) Bill being taken that night, it would not be taken.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Ronald Craufurd Munro Ferguson, esquire, for the Leith District of Burghs.

ADJOURNMENT.

LOSS OF THE "PORT YARROCK."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON, Member for Middlesbrough, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of

discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, “the loss of life caused by the loss of the British sailing vessel *Port Yarrock* ;” but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Deputy Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and less than 40 Members having accordingly risen :—

The House proceeded to the Business of the Day.

MOTIONS.

EQUALISATION OF RATES (LONDON) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) : I have to ask leave to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the equalisation of rates as between different parts of London. This measure, I may explain, is the same measure which was introduced last Session by my right hon. Friend now Secretary of State for India. The Bill of last Session was introduced with a short statement on the understanding that anything like a general discussion should be deferred till the Second Reading, a stage which was not reached not because of any opposition on the part of hon. Members, but simply for want of time. On this occasion I propose to defer any general statement to the Second Reading, and the Government will endeavour to put down the Second Reading for as early a day as possible. We have every desire for the fullest discussion, for we regard the measure as one of great importance, and will endeavour at the earliest possible moment to carry it into law.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That Leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the Equalisation of Rates as between different parts of London.”—(*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he thought the House was entitled to hear something more concerning this measure. The right hon. Gentleman told them it was exactly the same Bill as was introduced last year, but that Bill was not discussed, and it would only have been

courteous to the House to at least have stated the general line on which it was framed. They were certainly all agreed that there should be some re-arrangement of the system of local taxation in London ; but it was a peculiar thing to bring in a measure of this great importance, which affected a larger population than did the Home Rule Bill, without a single word of explanation. The Bill raised many questions which no doubt were more or less matters of detail and would be better discussed when the Bill had been printed, but the general question involved that of the re-arrangement of the whole system of Metropolitan taxation, and was so important that he thought London had not been treated with due respect by the introduction of the Bill without a word of explanation from the Minister in charge. They ought to have some general idea of the Bill before they read it a first time. Although they desired that the burdens of local taxation should fall more lightly upon the poorer districts, they realised that a re-arrangement would have to be made with great care or else the general burden might be made more heavy in the future than it had been in the past. What had to be guarded against was the danger that drawing from a common fund would lead to extravagance, which would ultimately increase the burden of the rates even in the poorer districts. He had the honour to represent in that House a district in which there had been extremely careful administration of local funds and in which the average expenditure was lower than in other poor districts. Probably this Bill would at first have the effect of reducing the rates even in that district, but he feared that ultimately the system of drawing upon a general fund would produce higher expenditure and greater extravagance with consequently increased burdens on the unfortunate ratepayers that he therefore held that they ought to be informed what safeguards were provided in the Bill against these evils.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) : No doubt there are a great many questions in this Bill which constitute proper matter for discussion. But the other day, when the question of First Reading was mentioned, I ventured to make an appeal to the House, which I understood to be

Mr. Havelock Wilson

favourably responded to from both sides of the House, and it was that there should be no discussion on the First Readings of Bills. It is almost unknown to have anything in the nature of a First Reading discussion on the introduction of private Members' Bills, and until very recent times it was extremely unusual to raise discussion on the First Reading of Government Bills that were not in the proper sense of the term highly controversial, like the Home Rule Bill and the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Bills of the character now proposed it has not been the custom to discuss on the First Reading. The House has suffered greatly from want of time to transact its business, and to make a practice of discussing Bills on their introduction will have a prejudicial effect. I am not speaking merely in the interests of this Government, for it is equally in the interests of both sides of the House and of any Government that Bills of this character should be laid on the Table without discussion and that debate should be deferred to the Second Reading. In the interests of the business of the House and of all parties who might be responsible for legislation, I venture to appeal to the House not to discuss at this stage a Bill on which they are not fundamentally divided.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square) : I will so far respond to the appeal which the right hon. Gentleman has just made as to refrain myself from discussing the Bill at this stage. It is true the Bill was introduced last year and that there was some little discussion upon it, but I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that we have practically abolished discussion on two stages of Bills—on going into Committee and on the Report stage. Therefore, we can scarcely be bound by the procedure in the past when discussion on these stages was allowed. I agree generally with what the right hon. Gentleman has stated, but I make this reservation. There were good reasons last year for discussing Bills on the Motion for First Reading, because it was evident that those Bills were introduced mainly to show the intentions and indicate the programme of the Government, and because there was no prospect of the Bills reaching the Second Reading stage. Therefore, the First Reading was the only

opportunity the Opposition had of showing what was their attitude towards the measures of the Government. This is a new Session, and, without being authorised to say so, I venture to think that, if more Bills are introduced without a prospect of their being brought to the Second Reading, it will be the duty of the Opposition to discuss them on the First Reading. In this case I do not wish to prolong the discussion upon the Bill itself. I only desire to enter this *caveat* as regards the general principle laid down by the right hon. Gentleman. I have no wish to assume an unfriendly attitude on the present occasion.

Mr. WHITMORE (Chelsea) said, he wished earnestly to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill to allow some considerable and sufficient interval between the First and Second Reading to enable the Local Authorities of London to consider and express their opinions on the Government proposal. Although there was some little discussion on the measure last year, it was understood that, in consequence of the pressure of highly controversial business, there was a great likelihood that the Bill would be dropped after the Second Reading, and therefore it did not receive the consideration it required. The right hon. Gentleman might rely on the co-operation of hon. Members in passing the Bill into law, but he must bear in mind that the practical merit of the measure depended on its details, which were necessarily of a complex nature, and it was therefore desirable that the Local Authorities which had practical knowledge of the subject should have ample opportunity of considering the details before their Representatives were asked to give an opinion on the Second Reading.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, he wished to support the appeal of the hon. Member for Chelsea, for he very much doubted whether the Local Authorities were so well acquainted with the provisions of the Bill as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think. The hon. Member for Islington had asked some very pertinent questions, and he regretted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not thought fit to give any answer, which he might have done in less time than he had occupied in stating his reasons for giving none. He

would like to remind the Leader of the House, too, that there was a great deal of difference between Government Bills and private Members' Bills. Progress with the latter could practically be stopped by any Member or section of Members. Opportunities for rejecting private Members' Bills were, in his opinion, ample; but Government Bills stood in a more favourable position, and he therefore thought it was desirable to have a discussion on the First Reading. It was impossible for Members to be always present in their seats, and, therefore, if there was a discussion and a vote taken immediately, a great many Members would have to give their votes without having heard that discussion. They were told that most of the districts in the Metropolis were favourable to the Bill, which was not surprising considering that its effect would be to reduce the rates in most parishes and to increase them in a few. But then they had to consider the question whether it was fair to a district which, by economy and prudent management, had kept down its rates that it should not be allowed to continue to derive the advantages following from that management. If they had two districts, one of which had managed its affairs with economy and care, and another district which had not been so fortunate before they made a prudent district contribute to the other, they ought to have clear and conclusive reasons. In the present case no such reasons had been given. There might be considerable safeguards in the Bill, but they had not been indicated; and it was quite clear that unless there were some safeguards the result might be that, although there might be at first a diminution in the rates throughout the greater part of the Metropolis, the sense of responsibility and the feeling for the necessity of economy would be weakened and the rates eventually be generally increased. He did not see why they should stop at the Metropolis in this matter. Why not allow the proposal to be carried out in other districts? In too many cases they legislated for the Metropolis in a hurry and on the spur of the moment. Last Session, with no notice to London, with no opportunity for the Local Authorities to consider what was being done, this House introduced clauses into a Bill

which not only entirely altered the management of the Metropolis generally, but placed it upon a different footing from that which prevailed in other large cities. He joined in expressing regret that Her Majesty's Government had not thought fit, on the introduction of the Bill, to give them some statement as to the character of the measure.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he would express a hope that this period of consideration would not be too long. This was the same Bill as the Bill of last Session, and he remembered that there was a large amount of literature which reached him from the Local Authorities bearing upon it in the shape both of Petitions against it and of recommendations in its favour. As far as Islington was concerned—[Mr. BARTLEY : South Islington.] No;—Islington; he spoke for the whole parish, for the Vestry had itself passed a resolution and sent him a Petition in favour of the Bill—he believed they were generally in favour of the Bill, and that it would help them to do what they had been doing steadily ever since the London Health Act was passed for the benefit of its own district and the general health of the community, and it was desired that the measure should receive early consideration. Having regard to the fact that the Session was of doubtful duration and that the Bill was introduced last Session and was lost, and inasmuch as he was prepared to support it on behalf of his constituency, he hoped the interval would not be too long.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, he did not want to go into the particular merits of this Bill, which, apparently, there was no very great desire to subject to exhaustive discussion at this stage; but he must make a few remarks with reference to what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the general principle of the House reserving to itself the right to discuss measures on the motion for their introduction. He must remind the House that formerly there were five stages in which a Public Bill was subjected to discussion in the House as to its principles—the introduction, Second Reading, the Motion for the Speaker to leave the Chair, the Motion that the Bill, as amended, be

considered, and that the Bill be read a third time. While those five opportunities remained it was usual to waive the first of them, and, generally speaking, in dealing with Bills of a not very contentious character, it was usual to leave the remaining four stages for the discussion of their principles. But now that the opportunity had been removed from Members of discussing the principle of a Bill except upon the Second and Third Reading, he thought the House had been very wise in reserving to itself the right which, he hoped, it was distinctly understood they did reserve—to discuss Bills upon the Motion for their introduction.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Walter Foster, and Mr. Sydney Buxton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 124.]

CONCILIATION BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I ask leave, Sir, to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the settlement of labour disputes. I think it may be regarded almost as a non-contentious measure by all sections of the House. [Mr. J. LOWTHER: What is it about?] My right hon. Friend says he does not know what it is. If he will allow me I will supplement what I have to say by a few preliminary remarks. This Bill, in substance, was before the House last Session, but I shall be very happy to state to the House shortly the provisions of the measure, and when I have done that I hope we shall allow the Bill to proceed as rapidly as we possibly can with a view to its speedily becoming law. The Bill of last year gave no powers of initiative to the Board of Trade, but the present Bill does, and to that extent it differs from the previous Bill. It states that—

“Where a difference exists or is apprehended between an employer or any class of employers, or between different classes of workmen, the Board of Trade may, if they think fit, exercise all or any of the following powers:—First, to inquire into and report the cause of the difference.”

Then, it may go further: it may invite

the parties to meet together by themselves, or through their representatives, under the presidency of a chairman mutually agreed upon or nominated by the Board of Trade, with a view to an amicable settlement of the difference. That is precisely following the lines that were taken with regard to the coal dispute last year. So far, that is an addition to the Bill of last year. The Board of Trade may also take the initiative, and where there seems to be a deadlock may intervene and endeavour to bring the parties together and constitute a Board with a view to an amicable settlement. The next clause is simply to take power to appoint a conciliator or Board of Conciliation in the case of any difference. As in the foregoing section, the Board of Trade, on the application of any employer or workmen interested, and after taking into consideration the circumstances, may, if it thinks fit, set up a Board of Conciliation in that district in order to deal with the special dispute. That can only be done, as in the Bill of last year, on application to the Board of Trade either by the employer or employed. There is a sub-section which says—

“If it is agreed or arranged”

—this goes beyond conciliation—

“to refer any such difference to a person appointed by the Board of Trade, or to two or more persons, one of whom is to be appointed by the Board of Trade, the Board of Trade may, if it think fit, make an appointment accordingly;”

that is to say, the Board of Trade may appoint an arbitrator; and it is proposed that it shall keep a list of persons who are willing to act in that capacity. There are many men at this moment in England who for the last 20 years have been doing admirable service as arbitrators or umpires. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of those services. Mr. David Dale, for example, has been engaged in this work for more than a quarter of a century, and has done the noblest service to the industries of the country. So has Dr. Spence Watson, and in the last Report he presented he stated he had just issued his 50th award, and that never in a single instance had any award been disputed, and others I might mention—Sir Rupert Kettle and Members of this House—who have done excellent service in this way, and who, I am sure, will allow their names to be placed

on a roll, or a list of honour, as men who are willing to give their impartial services for the promotion of conciliation. I see my right hon. Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James) sitting in his place. We all know what he has done in the shoe trade during the last few years, his admirable services, and the success with which he has intervened in disputes in Lancashire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire; and how he has prevented again and again the most serious outbreaks of industrial war, so to speak, in that great trade. Clause 3 gives power to aid in the establishment of Boards of Conciliation. In any districts where disputes are frequent, and adequate means do not exist to deal with them, the Board of Trade may appoint a person or persons to inquire into the conditions of the mischief and to confer with the employers and employed, with a view to aiding and assisting the bringing into existence of a Board of Conciliation. Practically, the object of this Bill may be summed up as a Bill to call, as far as possible, Boards of Conciliation into existence, to assist their organisation with such information, and such Rules, Regulations, and methods as have proved successful in the past, and to record and publish their decisions. It is part of their business to do all this to give proof of their usefulness and to enlist intelligent public opinion on their side. The fourth clause simply provides that there shall be a register of Conciliation and Arbitration Boards kept by the Board of Trade. The fifth clause requires that there shall be an annual Report made to Parliament of the work of these institutions. When we consider the vast mischief accruing to the industries of this country from labour disputes, I think we shall all agree that anything that can be done by this House to give sanction, aid, and assistance to institutions of this kind will be of the greatest possible benefit. The number of disputes recorded by the Labour Department during 1893 was 638, involving more than 600,000 persons. Of these, 525 ended during the year, of which the result is known, and the workmen were successful in 229 cases, involving 400,000 persons; they were partly successful in 110 cases, involving 140,000 persons; and they were wholly unsuccessful in 186 cases,

involving about 70,000 persons. It is impossible to consider the mischief that was caused to the industries of this country by the coal dispute of last year without our doing whatever lies in our power to minimise such evils. The mischiefs which accrued from that dispute did not terminate when the dispute was ended. We know that our supremacy in industries is no longer in dispute. We have fierce foreign competition. We cannot afford these industrial wars. The effect of them is that our competitors find new customers, and trade once diverted into a new channel does not easily revert to the old one. At least we lose some of it, and our people in consequence suffer miseries, starvation, and a load of debt, which are always the consequence of long-continued strikes. My right hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock) has a Bill before the House on behalf of the Chambers of Commerce, and I know he desires larger compulsory powers, to take evidence on oath, and to compel the production of books, &c. When we come to the Second Reading I hope we shall have an opportunity of discussing the desirability of extending the Bill, or otherwise; but I am quite sure the right hon. Gentleman's object is the same as that of the Government—to facilitate, as far as possible, the introduction of pacific measures rather than industrial war, and to minimise the mischief which at present results from strife between capital and labour.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the settlement of Labour Disputes."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, he was very glad the right hon. Gentleman had enlarged the scope of his Bill as compared with what it was when introduced last year, and he should be very glad to co-operate with the right hon. Gentleman in making it as effective as possible. He had had some experience in this matter. He hoped, however, that facilities would be given for discussing the broader question put forward in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Lubbock), because, after all, the Bill of the Government was only a tentative measure. They wanted to go a little further. They wanted to put

Mr. Mundella

into motion two Acts of Parliament already on the Statute Book, neither of which, for some reason or other, had ever been applied to labour disputes. But anything that could be done to induce both employers and employed to settle their differences by a system of conciliation—and, if that failed, by arbitration—would certainly receive his support.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) said, he would like to say a few words in answer to what the right hon. Gentleman had said as to the Bill of last year being treated as contentious.

MR. MUNDELLA : I beg pardon ; I made no statement about the Bill of last year being treated as contentious.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) said, the right hon. Gentleman had stated that he hoped this Bill would not be considered contentious. [MR. MUNDELLA : Hear, hear !] He thought that observation meant that the Bill of last year was treated as contentious. He, for one, pleaded guilty to having used the ordinary Forms of the House to prevent that Bill being taken at an unseemly hour because he and his friends thought it only touched the fringe of a great question, and he thought that this Bill now was of very much the same nature. He himself believed that the same good work that had been done by gentlemen in the past, to whom allusion had been made, could be done in the future without Act of Parliament at all. He complained that the Government, in dealing with this question, had omitted all power of making the decision of the Board of Conciliation binding upon either party. Yet without such a power the Bill would be absolutely useless. The question had been very carefully considered, and had been gone into very fully by the Labour Commission, and it appeared to him that it would be far better for both parties if the Government would wait until the Report of that Commission had been issued before proceeding far with the present Bill.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK said, he regretted as much as the noble Lord who had just spoken that there was no power contained in the Bill which would make the award of the Conciliation Board binding. He fully saw how difficult it would be to carry this out in all cases, but he be-

lieved that many disputes would occur in which both sides would be willing to agree to such a provision. He suggested that the Second Reading of the Bill should be taken at an early date. It was essentially a non-contentious measure, and, therefore, no great time need be occupied over it. His other objection to the provisions of the Bill as they now stood was that they did not go far enough. When the proper time came he believed they would be able to satisfy the right hon. Gentleman that there was a strong desire on the part of both employer and employed throughout the country to have stronger powers than those suggested in the Bill. The Bill as now brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman would not effect very much, and, all things considered, he thought it would be desirable to have a Committee appointed on the subject to take a certain amount of evidence. He urged the Government to take the Second Reading of the Bill at an early date and to refer the measure to a Select Committee, in order that the whole question might be thoroughly gone into.

*SIR A. ROLLIT asked whether the President of the Board of Trade would be willing to refer the Bill, backed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir J. Lubbock), himself and others, and promoted by the London Conciliation Board, to the same Committee, so that the suggestions contained in it might have full consideration? He was quite prepared to admit that some of the present proposals were improvements, but he suggested for the consideration of the President of the Board of Trade how the appointment of an arbitrator was to be of practical value unless there was some means of carrying out and enforcing his awards. If the parties agreed that an arbitrator should be appointed, surely it might be assumed that they would not object to his award being made the final determination of the matter. The power to administer an oath to witnesses, in order to secure the truth, and to summons witnesses, were also subjects for the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman suggested by the experience of the London Conciliation Board.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) asked whether it was desirable to deal with this subject by Bill at all? He doubted whether the

right hon. Gentleman could show that the Bill enabled him to do anything which he could not do already. He would probably say, as he said last year, that for what he proposed to do he wanted to have some kind of Parliamentary sanction. But in order to get that sanction it was not necessary to subject this grave and important question to the delays and difficulties incident to legislation. A Vote in the Estimates to meet the necessary expenses of conducting the inquiries and making the appointments would have secured all the Parliamentary sanction desired. That course had been adopted in regard to the appointment of Labour Correspondents, and he did not see why it should not have been taken last year in connection with this subject.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mundella, Mr. Secretary Asquith, and Mr. Burt.

Bill presented, and read first time.
[Bill 125.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

CIVIL SERVICE.—RESOLUTION.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's) rose to move—

"That it is desirable to recruit the First Division of the Civil Service by promotion from the Second Division."

In submitting the Motion he said he did not represent a Civil Service constituency, nor was he aware that any such constituency existed, but he and those hon. Members who had promised to support the Motion were actuated only by adherence to the principle of general utility which ought to be the mainspring of political action both inside and outside the House. It was strenuously asserted that the written promises and implied contracts between the Government and the Civil servants had not been fairly carried out, and if any reasonable doubt remained at the present time as to

the conditions of engagement and promises, surely the time had come when a clear and definite understanding should be arrived at. This great branch of the Public Service for which he spoke ought not to be conducted on haphazard chances or in irregular proceedings such as undoubtedly had occurred in the promotion and changes since 1870, when the pernicious system of patronage was abolished and open competition introduced instead. A quarter of a century ought to be a sufficient period of time for successive Governments to have made up their minds as to the best plan of governing the Civil Service. He had brought forward this Motion in consequence of attending an enthusiastic meeting in Exeter Hall, and he took up the question entirely on its merits. The fact of such a meeting being held showed that the gentlemen concerned were not afraid to appeal to public opinion; yet, at the same time, he thought that matters of that kind could be carried too far. But public opinion should be the breath of the law; and if the Government sought to evade discussion of the points which would be raised in this Debate, then he submitted they must have a case which would not bear discussion. At the meeting to which he referred the Member for South Islington was in the Chair, about two dozen Members of this House of different Parties were present, and co-operated in ventilating the grievances of the Civil servants, whilst many apologies were received from other Members, and also from Civil servants from all parts, who, while regretting their inability to attend, expressed their sympathy with the objects of the meeting. He should mention that the meeting invited analytical examination of the complaints put forward. In view of such a great demonstration, and the importance of the interests involved, the matter could not be lightly minimised by the Government officials who were concerned. This was a great question concerning the administration of the country; it was a matter of Imperial magnitude, and if ignored might tend to impair the efficiency of the administration in the most important Departments charged with responsibility. The Service should be contented and satisfied to be completely efficient, and this satisfaction

Mr. Stuart-Wortley

could be easily accomplished, as the claims of the Second Division were founded on justice and reason. The first resolution at the meeting protested against the unfair treatment which had been accorded to the Second Division by the permanent authorities, who, notwithstanding the recommendations of the Ridley Commission, and repeated promises of the Treasury both in and out of Parliament, persistently ignored the claims of the Second Division to promotion to the First Division, filling such appointments from without instead of by promotion from within the Service; whilst the second resolution protested against the delay of the Treasury in dealing with the other points referred to in the Memorial of last year. The contention of the Second Division clerks was not for more money, but they asked that the conditions under which they entered the Service should be faithfully observed, and they were able to advance claims to show that the highest posts now given to young untrained men outside ought to be given to the trained officials who were in the Public Service. The House of Commons had been most reluctantly chosen as the tribunal of appeal. Memorials sent through the usual official channels to the Treasury praying for redress had remained unanswered, and, therefore, it had become necessary to appeal to Parliament, as no other channel remained open to the gentlemen of the Second Division, numbering 3,500—and whose numbers would probably be augmented to 5,000 in a few years—and to respectfully submit and urge that the requisition placed in the hands of each candidate for a Second Division clerkship, stating that under certain circumstances he might look for promotion after eight years' service, should be adhered to. They maintained that this condition had not been loyally or justly carried out. In a Treasury Letter of the 19th June, 1884, dealing with the question of the number of Second Division Clerks promoted to the First Division, the Lords of the Treasury stated—

“Although the number of Second Division clerks promoted to the First Division must always bear a small proportion to the number not so promoted, it is not necessary that they should be an insignificant proportion to the First Division. On the contrary, my Lords look forward to that Division being largely replenished in certain Departments from the best

members of the Second Division. It will probably always be necessary to reserve a power of direct appointment to the First Division; but there are many Departments in which this power need not, so far as my Lords can foresee, be exercised habitually or even frequently. Promotion from the Second to the First Division may therefore fairly be considered as a legitimate aspiration for the superior members of the former.”

He contended that that, to a certain extent, proved the case he had laid down. Again, it could not be asserted that there was an insufficient number of eligible second-class men to furnish the necessary recruits for the First Division. The Ridley Commission reported very highly of their ability, and one member of that Commission, the hon. Member for Preston, declared that they were of as good stuff as any of the First Division, whilst the examiners and heads of Departments bore eloquent testimony to their ability. On the 6th of February of last year the Secretary for War, in reply to a question, admitted that in his Office he had men fit for promotion, but said that a compact between the Treasury and the War Office prevented this promotion. He would like to know if there was any reason to believe there was a similar compact in force throughout the Civil Service where the heads of the Departments had made recommendations for promotion which, as a result of unwritten negotiations, had been for some time withdrawn? The Secretary to the Treasury would probably reply that a large number of promotions had been made from the Second Division. A Return was rendered in February last which showed that some 109 promotions were made to the First Division, and to the intermediate division between that and the Second Division. But was it fair to term them the First Division promotions when a large number were really not to the First Division? He would like the right hon. Gentleman to say what promotions had been given to the Second Division in the Treasury itself, in the War, the Colonial, Home, Foreign, Education, Charity Commissioners, and Post Office Departments. He would also like to know the number of direct appointments from the outside to the First Division since the Report of the Ridley Commission. He believed that the right hon. Gentleman stated on the 18th December last that, while there had been only three promotions from the

Second Division to the First Division since the date of the Ridley Commission Report, 19 had been appointed from outside. He was informed that that was not the entire truth, but that 56, and not 19, such direct appointments had been made. Nineteen of these had been admitted into Class I. under examination, leaving 37 which had not been accounted for. The Second Division clerks contended that every class of superior clerkship was regarded by them as their natural inheritance, and they further submitted that every young untrained man who entered by such means as those to which he had reverted filled up a place which ought to be occupied by themselves, who had been trained in the business of their own Departments. The Ridley Commission declared that it was unnecessary to bring in young men into Class I., and in their Second Report they stated—

“We think the doors of promotion to all the upper posts should be open to any clerk who shows that he possesses the necessary qualifications for discharging the duties of the position.”

That was a recommendation which, coming from such a quarter, was deserving of serious consideration. The Commissioners further stated that the prizes of the Service should be open to exceptional fitness, and they advised that some definite and clear scheme of promotion should be formulated. Probably, at some times it might be possible that a gentleman could not be found in one particular office to suit the appointment vacant, but surely out of 3,500 gentlemen an efficient and capable officer could be found without bringing in outsiders. In the various ranks of the Second Division there were men fit to occupy the highest positions in the Service, whilst most of the eminent men who now filled with the utmost ability the various responsible positions under the Crown were those who had climbed from the lowest to the highest rung of the ladder. This was not a Party question, but a question of the efficiency of the Public Service of this great Empire, which was deserving of the most careful consideration. He hoped he should receive a sympathetic as well as a definite and clear statement of what would be done with regard to these promotions in the future, or other-

Mr. W. Field

wise he should be compelled to press the matter to a Division.

*CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) seconded the Motion from the firm conviction that it was undesirable in the interest of the country that a large body of public servants, numbering some 3,500, and who would probably eventually number 5,000, should continue to perform their duties while feeling upon the one hand aggrieved, and upon the other hand filled with chronic discontent. It might be asked whether he, having for a number of years served where great weight was attached to discipline, thought it desirable in the interests of the public that certain bodies in the Public Service should combine for the purpose of bringing their grievances to the House. As a broad rule he did not; but when he found that a body of public servants had their Memorials unceremoniously consigned to the waste-paper basket, without the common courtesy of a reply; when he found they had been refused permission to approach the heads of Departments by means of deputations, and had had recourse to the columns of the public Press, and that none of these courses had procured the smallest redress, then he was prepared to exonerate them completely from any desire to overthrow discipline when they came to this House as the final Court of Appeal. What was the demand of the Second Division clerks? It was not a demand for higher salaries or shorter hours, but a demand for fair play. It was a demand that the conditions under which they entered the Public Service should be neither minimised nor misconstrued, but loyally adhered to, and they further demanded that the recommendations contained in the Report of the Ridley Commission should be faithfully carried out. It was acknowledged that when each candidate for a clerkship in the Second Division presented himself for examination a paper was passed into his hands which left the impression upon his mind—and which it was shown was the impression the Government intended to convey—that if to continued industry and uprightness of character he added a certain amount of ability superior to that of the other clerks he might reasonably hope at the expiration of eight years to be promoted to the First Division. How had successive Adminis-

trations dealt with the Second Division clerks, who had been led to believe that the First Division should be largely replenished from the Second? It was said that 107 appointments had been made from the Second Division to the First, or to posts higher than the Second, but when investigated they were found to be promotions only in name. It was admitted, in reply to a question in this House, that only three promotions had been made from the Second Class to the First, whereas 19 promotions had been made from the outside, and this was not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. As a matter of fact, 56 promotions were made from the outside by means of first-class examinations and other methods, and the Second Class clerks considered themselves aggrieved in this matter, because they looked upon all promotions which were made from the outside—that was, when inexperienced, untried, and untrained men were brought into the Service over their heads—as an infringement of their legitimate rights. The right hon. Gentleman would perhaps tell them what promotions had been made in all the great Public Offices since the recommendations of the Ridley Commission. No excuse could be made that the Second Division did not produce a sufficient number of men suited for promotion, because, as the Member for Dublin had pointed out, the Secretary for War had admitted that in his Department there were men suitable for promotion, but that he was unable to carry out the contract owing to an arrangement which had been agreed upon between the Treasury and the War Office. To him, as a Radical, there would seem to be something of a social question at the bottom of this, and as if it was a case of birth and not worth, or rather of money, for, after all, to a great extent, a University education and high educational examinations meant a case of money and not brains. The fact that many of the men who came up for the examinations of the First Class Division were University graduates had been dwelt upon, but as a matter of fact there were many University graduates among the Second Division clerks, and graduates, too, of a University whose curriculum for the pass degree was higher than any other—namely, the University of London. The

question of competitive examinations had been spoken of. Familiar as he was with University and many other forms of examination he should not attempt to belittle examinations. Competitive examinations were excellent tests as compared with favouritism and similar methods. They were the best test known for untried, untrained, and inexperienced men, but were a very poor test as compared with the test of a man having performed satisfactorily for many years the very duties which these candidates were about to learn. It was asked why did not the Second Division clerks present themselves for examination? Many of them for the very cogent reason that they were already beyond the age limit. Was it fair to expect that a public servant, after toiling for years at seven hours each day, could enter a competitive examination on anything like equal terms with a young man fresh from a University, and having every hour of the day practically at his own disposal? It was demanding a double test from the Second Division clerks. It was as if the Military Authorities were to tell a man who had entered the ranks, and by long service, good conduct, and practical experience in the various duties of the profession, had worked his way up through the non-commissioned grades, and had arrived at the point to be promoted to a commission, that he should compete in the complicated and difficult examination demanded of candidates from Sandhurst. It was unfair to ask the Second Division clerks to perform their duties on the one hand, and to prepare for the examination on the other. He regretted to say that there was a tendency recently to take the Second Division men off the first-class work and put them on the lower work, and when their turn came for promotion to tell them they were not fit to perform the work which they had been performing when First Division clerks were absent. That was scarcely straightforward treatment; indeed, he might say it was a subterfuge. Again, it was not an uncommon thing for the heads of the Departments when they found an aspiring, zealous, and superior young man to recommend him for promotion. But the heads of the Departments knew that in doing that they were taking part in a screaming farce, because the recommendation was not worth the paper it was

written on, for, as the Secretary for War had said, there were many men in the Department fit for promotion, but he was not able to promote them owing to the fact that an arrangement existed between the Treasury and the War Office.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) was understood to say that the Treasury had made concessions to the Second Division clerks in the matter of promotion.

*CAPTAIN NORTON said, that what the right hon. Gentleman had said was true, and yet was not true. The Second Division clerks had been given to understand that they would be promoted to the First Division, and then the First Division was largely reduced without any adequate compensation been given to the Second Class clerks. All the Second Class clerks had had from the Treasury was their sympathy. That sympathy was a very valuable thing, no doubt, but the Second Class clerks would appreciate it more if it showed itself in providing a certain number of promotions. The hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) once said that the Ridley Commission recommended that the gulf which divided the First Division from the Second Division should be bridged over. But ever since the Ridley Commission the Government had been doing everything to widen the gulf. They heard a great deal about legitimate aspirations. It was said that every Second Division clerk on entering the Service carried in his knapsack the proverbial Marshal's baton; but when he placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder of promotion new, raw recruits, who enlisted under different conditions, jostled him out of his place. The Government should understand in this matter that honesty was the best policy. Some time ago it was the custom to capture recruits for the Military Service by representing that they would be paid 1s. per day, but the recruits soon found out there were so many arbitrary deductions from the 1s. that they did not get half the sum. The result was a falling-off in recruits. But, latterly, the authorities had modified their system of deception with very good results. Surely, the Government must know that they could no more succeed in deceiving the Civil servant than the soldier. He

would call upon the Government to act up to their pledges, and discontinue the present system which was crushing all hope out of the hearts of the Second Division clerks, by bringing in over their heads those untried and untrained men. There were two courses open to the Government. They could either revert to the original system under which all started at scratch and even weights, instead of some, as now, being handicapped to such a degree that they were practically weighted off the course of promotion. The old system had given the best officials the country could desire. Under it, the heads of Departments entered the Service by one single channel, and worked their way up from the bottom to the top. But if the Government did not revert to the old system, they could settle the matter by giving the Second Division clerks a certain proportion of the promotions—say one-half; and undertaking that, in the event of it being considered necessary to further reduce the First Division, adequate compensation would be given to the Second Division clerks for having their chances of promotion damaged. Until some such course was followed by the Government great discontent would continue in the Service; and it was on account of that firm conviction that he called upon the Government, in the interests of justice, efficiency, and economy, to deal fairly and honestly with the Second Division clerks.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"It is desirable to recruit the First Division of the Civil Service by promotion from the Second Division,"—(Mr. Field,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): In rising to reply to the observations made by the Mover and Seconder of this Resolution, I do not wish to find fault with them in any way for the mode in which they have brought forward the question, because I admit readily that the Second Division clerks have long had what they consider to be a grievance.

We heard of it in this House last year. We know that they have given utterance to it at meetings in Exeter Hall, and they have brought it before many Members of Parliament. I will not say that they had no right to attempt to influence Members in their favour, but I think it very doubtful whether their attempts should have been as vigorous as they have been. I do not refer to the Second Division clerks only, but also to other persons who are in the employment of the Government and who use their influence on Members of Parliament with the object of getting their demands brought before the House of Commons when they might have their cases treated in another and more satisfactory way. I will say at once that the Treasury have attempted to act, in connection with the Second Division clerks and the question of their promotion, in a straightforward and honest manner. From the first the Department have thought it their duty to follow strictly the recommendations of the Playfair and Ridley Commissions, and I think I shall be able to show that the grievances said to exist are not such as has been alleged by the two hon. Members. The Playfair Commission recommended that there should be two Divisions—the Higher Division and the Lower Division. I will read an extract from their Report—

“the amount of simple routine work in the bulk of Public Offices is very great in proportion to the amount of work of a higher class. The mechanical and monotonous labour on which clerks must, under such circumstances, be so long and continuously employed, in offices where no division or an inadequate division of labour exists, does not by any means, as a matter of course, fit them for discharging the duties of those higher posts in the Service which involve responsibility, discretion, and power to direct work, and to deal with the outside public in such a manner as to uphold the credit and efficiency of their Department.”

To carry out this division of work it was necessary that there should be—

“two separate and distinct schemes of examination for admission to the Public Service, and two separate and distinct grades of clerks.”

Then I come to the question of promotion. From what has fallen from the Seconder of the Resolution it would be thought that the Second Division clerks had a perfect claim to promotion into the Higher Division. That is not so at all. The Ridley Commission recommended that

clerks might be promoted from the Second Division to the higher, but that such promotions should be exceptional and not the rule. This Motion would be contrary to that recommendation. It would make promotion the rule, and not the exception. The Playfair Commission had laid stress upon the necessity of strict division of labour between the higher and lower ranks in the passage which I have already quoted. The Ridley Commission, in like manner, considered that the routine work of the Second Division was not work that fitted every man in that Second Division for undertaking the duties of a First Division clerk, and they expressed the following emphatic opinion:—

“We have no doubt that it will always be necessary to introduce a very limited number of men by means of a higher examination, to fill directly some of the more important posts of the Public Service. We think it an object of the most serious importance that men of the same standard of liberal education as those who now adopt the open professions should be attracted into the Public Service and trained there, for selection for the highest permanent posts.”

*SIR A. ROLLIT: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the words he has read do not mean, not that every Second Division clerk is unfit for the First Division, as he has wrongly implied, but that there are certain high and responsible positions, in which orders and directions are given, which might be otherwise filled?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I did not say that there were not clerks in the Second Division fit for the higher work.

SIR A. ROLLIT: I am speaking of your interpretation of the words you quoted.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I wish now to draw attention to the difference in the competitive examinations for entry into the two divisions of clerks. The competition for the Second Division consists of ten subjects—handwriting, orthography, arithmetic, copying MS. (to test accuracy), English composition, geography, indexing or docketing, digesting returns into summaries, English history, and book-keeping. The examination for entry into the First Division is very much wider. It consists of 13 heads of subjects—English composition (including précis-writing), History of England (including that of the Laws and Constitution), English language and literature, Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian

languages, literature, and history, Mathematics (pure and mixed), Natural Sciences, Moral Sciences—that is, logic, mental and moral philosophy, Jurisprudence, and Political Economy. That shows a difference in the examinations for the two classes. No doubt many men who enter the Second Division are competent to undertake the work of an Upper Division clerkship. Many of them are University men, and many are members of the London University, where the standard is very high; but I must draw attention to the fact that there is nothing to prevent Second Division clerks from going in for the examination for Class I. Not only can they go in, but they have five extra years in which to do it. While a candidate from outside is obliged to compete between the ages of 22 and 24, a Second Division clerk can compete up to the age of 29. That is a very great advantage. This Resolution may be read in the sense either that all appointments to the First Division must take place from the Second Division, or only that such promotions should take place as are possible. It is not very clear. In the limited form the Government could accept it at once, but it cannot be accepted in the wider sense. If it were to stand in its larger form it would injure a very large section of Her Majesty's subjects. Now, everybody in the United Kingdom can compete in the examination for Class I., whereas if all appointments were to be made from the Second Division, everybody would be shut out except those who happen to be in that Division. I think some notice ought to be taken of that point. Then comes the recommendation of the Playfair Commission with reference to promotion from the Lower Division to the Higher. They say—

“Promotion from the Lower to the Higher Division of the Service should be a matter of rare occurrence. This is necessary if there is to be any educational test for the Higher Division; and it is reasonable, not only because the original qualifications are lower, but also because the character of the work in the inferior grades will be rarely calculated to develop superior capacities. Such a promotion should not take place without a certificate from the Civil Service Commissioners granted upon a special recommendation of the head of the Department, and with the assent of the Treasury, and should be published in *The Gazette*.

The Ridley Commission also reported—

Sir J. T. Hibbert

“We are of opinion that it is desirable to secure young men of more liberal education for those posts in the Service which are not simply clerical, but demand a wider and more cultivated view of public affairs than can, as a rule, be expected from youths entering by the lower examination. We agree with the Playfair Commission that the best preparation for the Upper Division is not to be found in the purely clerical routine of the ordinary clerkships, though there may be exceptions. We are of opinion that, on the whole, open competition is the best method of selection.”

I do not for a moment wish to cast any reflection upon the Second Division clerks. I have no doubt that numbers of them are quite capable of competing in Class I., and of taking high places in it; but I wish to be allowed to say that the Ridley Commission recommended that promotions from the Second Division should be the exception. I think I am perfectly justified in saying that. It is said that the War Office have gentlemen who are fitted for promotion, but who cannot be promoted because some arrangement has been made between the Treasury and the War Office. Arrangements were made by the Treasury, not only with the War Office, but with other public Departments, to carry out the recommendations of the Ridley Commission to the effect that it was necessary to reduce the numbers of the Upper Division, and it is owing to this necessary reduction in the Upper Division that these promotions cannot take place. An advantage has been secured by this reduction of the Upper Division, which is that it has enabled a larger scale of salaries to be paid. Therefore, certain advantages do accrue from the reduction. Now I come for a moment to the question of the number of promotions that have been made—and here I think there has been a certain amount of misrepresentation. The number 56 has, I think, been mentioned by more than one speaker, but I have not been able to discover that there is any ground for it. I have never said anything of the kind, and I cannot find in the Treasury anything which bears it out. During the time which has elapsed since the issue of the Second Report of the Ridley Commission to the present date the total number of appointments from the Second Division to the First Division and to staff places together has been 132. There have been 12 appointments from the Second Division to the First, and these

are appointments ordinarily filled by Class I. competitions. And during the same period, how many appointments does the House suppose have been made under open competition? Why, only 20. That, therefore, shows a large number of appointments from the Second Division—a larger proportion than even the Ridley Commission would have led the Second Division clerks to expect. In addition to these 12 promotions there have been 46 others which formerly, though not now, were classed as Class I. appointments. The 132 appointments have been divided between the Departments as follows:—The Admiralty 23, the Board of Agriculture 2, the Board of Trade 3, the Bankruptcy Department 6, the Patent Office 2, the Office of the Chief Secretary (Ireland) 4, Customs 2, Scotch Fishery Board 1, Inland Revenue Department 58, Irish Land Commission 2, Local Government Board (England) 5, Local Government Board (Ireland) 1, Paymaster General's Office 1, Public Works Office (Ireland) 8, Post Office 1, Science and Art Department 2, Secretary for Scotland's Office 1, Treasury 1, the Valuation Office (Dublin) 7, War Office 1, Woods and Forests 1. That is a total of 132. In connection with these promotions, I think I ought to state to the House that up to the present time, from the commencement of this new system, the Treasury have never hesitated to sanction recommendations made for promotion from any Department, and, therefore, whatever my hon. Friends wish to say as to the action of the Treasury they cannot say that we have not assented to the promotions proposed by the Departments. It does not rest with the Treasury to suggest these promotions, but with the different Departments. The Treasury have no authority to make recommendations, but they have to consider the proposals when they come before them. If any Public Department has a vacancy which it thinks can be adequately filled by an able man from the Second Division, if it makes a representation I can assure the House that that recommendation will be favourably considered by the Treasury in the future as it has been in the past. With respect to the general question, I can only say that I have been rather twitted with having expressed sympathy with the Second Division clerks. I would assert,

however, that I have a real sympathy for them. I know them to be aspiring, and hoping to rise to positions in the First Division. I sympathise with them in that aspiration. I can only say that the matter will always be dealt with sympathetically by the Treasury. I have no doubt it will be dealt with sympathetically by the Departments; but I do hope that if my hon. Friend thinks it proper and necessary to carry his Motion to a Division the House will consider seriously before it passes such a Resolution. The Civil Service of this country is a very important body—one of the most important bodies in the country—and bears favourable comparison with similar bodies in any other country. I should be sorry if the House should think proper to pass a Resolution which would tie the hands of the Treasury or of the Government with respect to these appointments. On those grounds whilst, as I say, I sympathise in the strongest way with the aspirations of these gentlemen I do not think that they have made out their case against the Government. I consider that the Report of the Ridley Commission has been carried out honestly and fairly in their interest as well as in that of the State, and I see no reason why, as time goes on, there should not be an increased number of promotions made from the ranks of the Second Division as vacancies occur.

*MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I cannot but feel that I have a certain responsibility in this matter as having preceded the right hon. Gentleman opposite at the Treasury, and having been in Office when the Ridley Commission issued its Second Report. The House will feel that I am only doing my duty in stating my view with regard to the matter before the House. It would be wrong for anyone who has held the Office that I have held, and who has had the same long experience of the Civil Service, to refrain, from whatever motive, from giving his opinion frankly to the House. With regard to what fell from the right hon. Gentleman opposite in his last words: he spoke of the high character of our Civil Service. I believe there is no country which has a Civil Service so good as this country. It has served us in excellent stead, and what-

ever changes there may have been in the currents of public opinion the British Civil Service has always maintained its high and intelligent position, and has never gone back in public estimation. We are far from the days when it was considered that clerks in the Civil Service played from 10 till 4. They work hard, and their work is highly appreciated, both by their employers—the public—and those who are immediately placed over them. I would make an earnest appeal to the House not to tamper in any way with the general principles of our Civil Service, of which one of the chief is that new recruits are to be taken from all classes of society. The large majority are taken from those—to whatever class they may belong—who are able to pass a certain high examination. I regret when I heard an hon. Member opposite speak about “birth.” Birth has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the matter. The question is whether it is desirable that a certain number of men should still be admitted to the Civil Service who are able to pass that extremely difficult examination. Hon. Members may say, “What is the use of requiring Civil servants to be acquainted with those branches of study in which they are examined; is not the experience gained in the Second Division sufficient?” Well, I say as a taxpayer and a Member of Parliament who has taken a great interest in this matter for many years that the examination for the higher positions in the Civil Service should be such as to enable the country to secure the pick of the best men in the country so that we should not be obliged, as a rule, to resort to the Second Division. There is nothing anti-democratic in that—nothing that can jar on the sensibilities of the most advanced Radical. We ought to be able to secure the most intellectual portion of the public for the public Civil Service, as it is secured in other branches of life. I would remind the House how we have arrived at this general position, and why there is this discontent to a certain extent, which I deplore, and which I hope will be removed as time goes on by the promotions which will take place and to which the Government have pledged themselves. At the same time, let me say this—that it is one of the mischiefs of Motions like the present

that they tend to tempt Ministers to say just a little more and to hold out a few more hopes than they afterwards are able to fulfil, and in this way expectations are raised, the failure to fulfil which is brought forward subsequently as a breach of faith—and we know on what slight foundation these charges are made. If any other Minister speaks, I urge him—and I do this quite as much on behalf of Civil servants as against them—to let the House know as clearly as possible what the Government intend to do, and do not let them hold out vague hopes of departing from what has been recommended by the Playfair and Ridley Commissions. There were phrases in the Report of the Ridley Commission which might be interpreted in different ways. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of accepting the Motion if it were slightly modified.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I do not think I went as far as that.

MR. GOSCHEN: I think he did. Well, I should deprecate any such course. Let there be a clear understanding on this matter. I believe the general principle to be this—that a certain number of the Second Division are to be promoted, not, however, as the rule but as the exception, and that exception is to be based on the recommendation of the heads of Departments. I am glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that the Treasury have not interfered but have sanctioned all the recommendations made to them. Now, how did they arrive at that position? The Report of every Commission has been founded on a desire for a reform in the Civil Service. The country desires economy, and, although by the abolition of a certain number of places a certain immediate economy is effected, discontent is raised in the ranks of the Civil servants, and there are heard, as the House has had experience to-day, suggestions of compensation for loss of prospects. I can understand that there should be compensation for loss of prospects, but it is a very elastic principle to introduce. There are hon. Members who hold the view that the State is almost prohibited from diminishing the number of appointments, all of which are not necessary for the Public Service, because of the fear of disappointing the expectations of those who have joined the Civil Service. If there are a certain number of higher posts and a certain

number of lower, I can quite conceive that those in the lower will consider it a grievance if the number of higher posts are reduced. The country should know its own mind; it ought not first to abolish posts upon grounds of economy and then compensate discontented public servants for that abolition. I have thought it right to mention this to the House. I do not think I have exceeded my duty in doing so. In the alterations made in the reforms in the Customs there was discontent engendered. It slumbered for a time, but the nation had to repay in the end a portion of the amount saved by the posts that were abolished. The upshot of this part of my remarks is this—that I would urge the House not to interfere too much with the Executive Government in the management of the Civil Service. It is often urged that the Government should conduct its business on the same footing as a private firm; but how, I would ask, could a private firm conduct its business if its *employés* were able to appeal to the outside public in regard to questions of promotion and salary? It would be impossible. The Government find their friends ever ready to support them on political questions, but their friends sometimes find it difficult to give that support in regard to executive functions. I strongly sympathise with the Civil Service; but, impressed as I am with its excellence and industry, I consider it to be my duty in cases like this to support the Executive Government, and to allow no feeling of Party and no political differences to prevent my speaking out on a question like that involved in the present Motion, which really affects the whole Executive Government. I should look upon it as a disaster if this Motion were carried. It would be, indeed, difficult for the Executive Government to carry on the daily work of the nation if the House of Commons interfered too frequently between the employer and the *employé*, and, therefore, on behalf not only of the Government, but of the taxpayer, I make an earnest appeal that the Motion should not be carried.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: I hope that the important speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite will have all the weight which it ought to have with the House, for there is no one who has had fuller experience or is better able to

judge of facts of this kind than the right hon. Gentleman. I rise thus early in the Debate in order to save the time of the House by expressing clearly the view of the Government now responsible in this matter. Of course, one of the first objects of any Government is to give satisfaction and contentment to every branch of the Civil Service, whether it is the highest or the lowest. I hope nobody will controvert that obvious fact. The principles on which these different classes of Civil servants are established were set forth in the language of the Reports of the two Commissions to which reference has been made. One paragraph, to which I would specially call attention, is in these words—

“We have no doubt that it will always be necessary to introduce a very limited number of men, by means of the higher examination, to fill directly some of the more important posts in the Public Service.”

Anybody who has occupied a responsible position in the Executive Government must know that the administration depends on keeping the more important posts in the hands of men of the very highest ability and education, and to depart from that would be to break down the just pride of this country in the efficiency of its Civil Service. The principle upon which Class I. is founded, and which was laid down by the Playfair Commission—a Commission composed, by the way, of men in non-official positions—is that it should be open to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, irrespective of birth or social position. In this way we get the pick of the nation. The Second Division is chosen from a different class—not socially, but as regards the educational test. They are men who represent, only in a much better form, those who in the old days were called “supernumeraries,” though the latter were no doubt introduced without examination. The view taken of Class II. by the Ridley Commission is that they are required on account of the amount of simple routine work being very great in proportion to the work of the higher class. The work falling to members of Class II. is not, as a rule, of a kind that fits them for the highest posts. If the House considers this matter it will see that from the manner in which these appointments are made, the men of the Second Division are not *primâ*

facie of the order best fitted for the First Division. They can, of course, take part in the competitive examinations for the First Division if they are fit for it. The whole object of the scheme proposed by the Commission was that there should be two separate and distinct grades of clerks, the positions in which were to be competed for in two separate and distinct examinations. It has been remarked in the course of the Debate that in all trades and professions promotion is from the ranks, but it could scarcely be contended that a gasfitter is necessarily qualified for the post of chief engineer. The recommendation of the Ridley Commission as to promotions from the Second to the First Division has been closely observed. I may say, on behalf of the Treasury and the Government, that whenever the head of a Department has reported, as has occurred from time to time, that certain members of the Second Division have shown exceptional capacity and such qualifications as would fit them for the First Division, they have always received such appointments. That, I believe, will satisfy, as it ought to satisfy, the House. The hon. Member for Dublin (Mr. Field) says he has received a large number of communications upon the subject, and I regret to hear it, because a question of this kind ought not to be made a matter for a personal canvass. The right hon. Gentleman opposite and myself, acting under a full sense of official responsibility, believe that the principles laid down in the recommendations of the Commissions are perfectly sound, and that if the House of Commons were hastily to endeavour to set those principles aside they would do infinite mischief, and would strike a fatal blow at the organisation of the Civil Service. Let the House consider for a moment what has been done in this matter. Complaint has been made that promotion is slow in the Civil Service. Promotion has undoubtedly been slow, but that has been caused by the necessities of the case, the great object having been to have a few men at good salaries for first-class work, and a number of men at sufficient salaries for inferior work. Steps have been taken for the purpose of accelerating promotion, including the creation of a number of staff appointments, so that the reasonable expectations of the clerks in the

Second Division have been fully met. As my right hon. Friend has pointed out, there have been, since 1888, 12 promotions from the Second to the First Division, whilst the number appointed to the First Division from outside has been 20. That, I submit, shows a fair proportion of promotions from the Second to the First Division, and is an adequate fulfilment of the policy recommended by the last Commission. I have taken great interest in this matter. I have watched the promotions from the Second into the First Divisions, and what happens is this—though the work in the Second Division is not of the highest order the heads of Departments are enabled to pick out in it men of high natural ability who, by sedulous devotion to the Public Service, show themselves capable of discharging the duties of the First Division. Men of that character become known in their office. Not long ago the President of the Local Government Board recommended a man from his Department, and the promotion was immediately assented to. Whenever a fit person is recommended for promotion in this way the Treasury has never refused, and will never refuse, to make the appointment. I cannot believe that there can be anybody in this House who will say that no man is to go into the First Division who had not been a Second Division Clerk. Nobody, I think, can maintain such a proposition as that, for it would necessarily lower the whole character of the First Division. Instead of opening the competitive examination to the whole country you would confine it to persons who have been deliberately admitted to the Civil Service upon a lower scale of examination. Anything that would be more destructive of the Public Service of the country it would be impossible to conceive. What the Second Division have a right to ask is that those amongst them who in the work of their Departments have shown themselves capable men, and men on a level with the men of the First Division, should be admitted to that Division. That is a view that the Government accept. If there have not been more promotions it has been because there have been so few vacancies. I think I am right in saying that during the time the late Mr. W. H. Smith was First Lord of the Treasury by his directions no appointments were made from

outside at all. This was necessarily so, in order to carry out the recommendation of the Commission that all vacancies in the First Division should be filled up by transfer. I have endeavoured to state the view of the Government on this subject. We stand upon the Report of the Ridley Commission and the Playfair Commission, both most capable bodies, and we would advise the House to do the same. If, as representing the Treasury in this matter, I might add anything to what has been said by my right hon. Friend (Sir J. T. Hibbert), I would ask the House not to wreck that which is perhaps more than anything else essential to the good administration of the country—namely, the organisation of the Civil Service, and at the same time not to let it be believed that there is any wish whatever that the clerks of the Second Division should be treated with any unfairness. We desire to give what was called in revolutionary France a career open to talent in every form. We appeal to every class in the country to compete for situations in the First Division, while as to the clerks in the Second Division who were appointed on a lower examination, we say that if they prove their capabilities for occupying the highest positions they will have the good will and the cordial good wishes of the Executive Government. I hope that, with these assurances, my hon. Friend will be satisfied, and that he will not press his Motion to a Division.

MR. W. FIELD said, that after the speeches of the two right hon. Gentlemen, he did not deem it wise to trouble the House any further in the matter, but he trusted that the Secretary to the Treasury and the Leader of the House would take to heart the arguments he had laid before them and that the claims of the Second Division clerks would in the future receive every consideration.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

LAW OFFICERS (PRIVATE PRACTICE).

RESOLUTION.

MR. HANBURY (Preston), who had given notice of his intention to call attention to the Treasury Minute of December 1892, regulating the official

fees and the private practice of the Attorney and Solicitor General; and to move—

"That this House regrets that the public remuneration of the Law Officers having been increased in consideration of the arrangement as to private practice therein specified, that arrangement has been widely departed from,"

said, his Motion was not aimed in any way against the Law Officers of the Crown. Had he been in the position of the Attorney General, and had he had a Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with who would have allowed him to draw larger fees than were ever drawn before by a Law Officer, he should have done exactly the same as the present Attorney General (Sir C. Russell) had done. If he brought any charge at all it was against the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) for not having acted upon his own Treasury Minute. That Treasury Minute certainly led laymen to suppose that the private practice of the Attorney General and Solicitor General would be very largely reduced, and in fact that they would have no private practice whatever except upon retainers given to them before they took Office and practice in two specified Courts. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was the guardian of the Public Purse, and it was of no use to put extra pennies on the Income Tax if he did not keep a very strict eye on the way in which money leaked out of the Exchequer. Above all things, the right hon. Gentleman ought to be careful to prevent any expenditure which was in distinct violation of the Treasury Minute being indulged in for the benefit of his colleagues on the Treasury Bench. One of the great benefits which the country was to have derived from the new system started by the present Government in regard to the payment of the Law Officers of the Crown was that of greater clearness. As a matter of fact, he (Mr. Hanbury) thought the country had been rather mystified under the new system. The information given with regard to it was at present very scant indeed. Under the new arrangement the Law Officers obtained larger fees than formerly, whilst a new Office was set up. It was due to the public that they should know precisely what the arrangement was. Hitherto a Return had always been printed showing what remuneration

the Attorney General and Solicitor General received. He (Mr. Hanbury) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day whether he would present such a Return this year, and the reply was that no such Return would be given. The House had been told that the new arrangement would save the money of the public, whilst at the same time the public were to be entitled to a greater portion of the time of the Law Officers. It was said to be monstrous that the Law Officers should be paid high fees, and yet be able to give practically all their time to private practice. He himself had always protested against that system, and had especially objected to certain fees that used to be taken by the Attorney General. Well, everybody had supposed that, after all the parade of virtue that had been made by the present Government, the public would have obtained more of the time of the Law Officers. It turned out that there was a great deal more hidden under the word "appear" in the Treasury Minute than Members had been led to believe. It seemed that the Attorney General and the Solicitor General were only prevented by the Treasury Minute from actually appearing in Court, and that they were perfectly at liberty to take any private practice whatever in their chambers, so that there was, in fact, practically no alteration in the system, inasmuch as the Law Officers might devote a great deal of time to their private practice as long as the public did not know of it. Formerly the private practice was done openly, and he contended that the public had no idea whatever that when the change in the system was introduced it would still be possible for the Law Officers to act secretly in Chambers although they could not appear in open Court. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in answering the question he (Mr. Hanbury) had put to him on the subject, quoted the words of the Attorney General and acted as the Attorney General's mouthpiece. He (Mr. Hanbury) had some reason to protest against this. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was responsible for the Treasury Minute, and he ought to act as a check upon the action of the Attorney General, and ought to see that his own Treasury Minute was carried out. The Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day con-

fessed his complete ignorance of the whole subject.

SIR W. HARCOURT was understood to say that he had not stated that he was ignorant.

MR. HANBURY said, he had questioned the right hon. Gentleman with regard to two retainers. One related to the Salt Union and the other to the Sutherland case. Well, the Treasury Minute dated back to the appointment of the present Attorney General and Solicitor General. He wished to know what was meant exactly by the words—

"Retainers accepted before the appointment of the present Law Officers."

As a layman, he confessed he did not exactly understand what the word "retainers" covered, but he was told by his legal friends that it might cover a vast amount of ground. It might mean that if the Attorney General or the Solicitor General had been engaged by any private client for a particular suit before his acceptance of Office he should be allowed to conduct that suit, and he (Mr. Hanbury) would not complain of an arrangement of that kind. He was also told, however, by lawyers that it might mean that one of the Law Officers had accepted a sort of general retainer to act on behalf of any particular Railway Company or other company which was always having lawsuits, and that in that case he was at liberty to appear in every action that Company might bring or defend. If so, it was a farce, and they ought to know what was the meaning attached by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to his own Treasury Minute. He would now proceed to the other portion of his case, which was this: The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that he was ignorant of the two particular cases which he (Mr. Hanbury) had mentioned—the Salt Union case and the Sutherland case. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was very specific in the answer which he made, and so was the Attorney General. He did not deal with these retainers as though they were general retainers given, say, by a Railway Company, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking as the mouthpiece of the Attorney General, said that in each of these two cases the retaining fee had been given before the acceptance of Office, and with reference to the litigation referred to in the ques-

tion. He might say that he only mentioned these two cases because he saw in the newspaper reports that the Attorney General or the Solicitor General had received very large fees, and because it was possible there might be other cases of the kind; and as the Treasury would not publish this arrangement, or tell them what was meant by this retainer under which the Attorney General and the Solicitor General acted, the public must, of course, protect its own interest in the matter, and know what the Treasury meant by having a Return delivered of the fees which its own public officers received from private clients. To take the Sutherland case:—The Chancellor of the Exchequer told him, in answer to a question specifically directed to the Sutherland case, that the Attorney General had received his retainer before he accepted Office. This statement came from a Minister who was responsible for the Public Purse, and not only that, but from a Minister who was specially responsible in this case, because by his own Treasury Minute he constituted himself the sole check upon the Law Officers of the Crown. Obviously the Chancellor of the Exchequer had paid no attention to this case, and it seemed that the Attorney General was in ignorance too, not as to the Treasury Minute, but as to the date of the death of the Duke of Sutherland.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What has that to do with it?

MR. HANBURY: Everything, because the right hon. Gentleman said that the retainer was given before the present Government took Office, and that the retainer was in reference to the litigation in the Sutherland case. [Sir W. HARCOURT dissented]. The Chancellor of the Exchequer shook his head. What, he said, was this—

“In each of the cases a retaining fee had been given before the acceptance of Office and in reference to the litigation referred to in the question.”

What was the litigation in the Sutherland case? It arose out of the will of the late Duke of Sutherland.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): Partly.

MR. HANBURY: Is the hon. and learned Gentlemen only going to deal with a part of the case? Is he going to

deal with the business arising out of the will of the Duke of Sutherland?

SIR C. RUSSELL: Yes.

MR. HANBURY: What I want to point out is that the Attorney General did not take Office until six weeks after the Duke of Sutherland died. The Chancellor of the Exchequer laughed at that. Well, they knew how trustworthy a guardian of the Public Purse he was. Surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to guard the Public Purse particularly well when he was under a Treasury Minute to be sole judge as to how far it must be departed from, and the public money expended upon his own colleagues without the return which they had been led to expect. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not entitled to laugh at that. It was a matter with which the right hon. Gentleman ought to deal stringently. It was certain that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was ignorant as to these two cases, although they were cases which ought to have been referred to him. The Minute said that in all cases of doubt—and surely the Sutherland case is one of doubt—reference was to be had to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was this question ever brought before him?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Certainly not.

MR. HANBURY: That showed the loose way in which this business had been transacted. Somebody was to blame in the matter. This Treasury Minute had been very loosely interpreted. He must ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Treasury Minute had been carried out, and whether any case of this kind had been brought before his notice? The Treasury Minute from first to last had been a gross deception, and it was under a misconception that last year they voted a large sum of money for the support of a new office and to raise the amounts of the fees of the Law Officers of the Crown, which he was told were upon an enormous scale, and based upon the fees paid to the Attorney General for private practice. Nobody was more ready than himself to acknowledge the abilities of the Attorney General. It should not be supposed that he wanted to depreciate the enormous talents of the hon. and learned Gentleman; but he would say that it was dangerous to set

up such a standard as that. Having once set up a standard of that sort, they might hereafter have men of inferior ability filling the office, but yet the standard of payment must remain the same. His chief object in bringing this matter before the House of Commons was to get information, and to whom to appeal for information he really did not know. The Chancellor of the Exchequer upon his own confession was ignorant, and did not know what was going on. He did not know the circumstances in regard to the Sutherland case. He was not aware that this case had arisen after his own Government had come into power.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It did not arise.

MR. HANBURY: Then they knew how this Treasury Minute had to be interpreted. They knew the loose way in which it was to be interpreted. If that was the case—if they had the distinct statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that in his opinion, under the Treasury Minute, the language was so loose that it was quite possible for the Attorney General or the Solicitor General to get large fees in connection with the will of a man who died six weeks after the Government came into Office, although that Treasury Minute distinctly said that they might act only upon retainers given before the Government came into Office, then he said that this Treasury Minute was not worth the paper upon which it was written and was a mere farce, and that the public was entitled, in view of the confession of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to have more definite information, and that they ought to have laid upon the Table of the House the terms of the precise arrangement come to between the Treasury and the Law Officers of the Crown, so that the House, when upon the Estimates they voted the salaries of the Law Officers, should have the full information before them. He begged to move his Motion.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to second the Motion.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"This House regrets that the public remuneration of the Law Officers having been increased in consideration of the arrangement as to private practice therein specified, that arrangement has been widely departed from."

—(Mr. Hanbury.)

Mr. Hanbury

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): I thank the hon. Member for his tone of personal courtesy to myself. He has travelled considerably wide of the Resolution which is on the Paper. I wish to call the attention of the House to the precise point which is raised. It is no longer a discussion on the original arrangement in the Treasury Minute of 1893. The complaint is that the Minute has not been observed by the Law Officers. The question of the new arrangement was discussed, and discussed at considerable length, upon two separate occasions in the month of March 1893, and the House approved of the arrangement which had been entered into with the Law Officers. The point now is whether the Law Officers have observed the terms of the contract with the Treasury. I will say in a sentence that not only according to the letter but according to the spirit of that arrangement the Law Officers of the Crown have adhered to the terms of that Minute. I will say more—and I speak for my colleague and myself—that we have not exercised the rights we might have exercised under the Minute, and have declined to act in many cases in which, under the Minute, we should have been entitled to act. The hon. Member also complains that he has had no Return of fees paid to the Law Officers. Let me remind him that he has had that information in the most specific form in which it could be given for the only complete year of Office of the present Law Officers. On the 12th of January he put on the Paper a question which asked for the fees paid in previous years, as contrasted with the amounts paid to the Law Officers under the new arrangement, and on the 12th of January these figures were given by me in answer to the hon. Member for Islington; and that answer was given in full, and will be found in the Parliamentary Reports of the 13th of January. I come to the question of what this Minute means. On two occasions in March—the hon. Member for Birmingham will probably

recollect it—I stated that according to the construction of this Minute the Law Officers were entitled to act upon the reservation expressly made—namely,

“Except upon retainers delivered before the acceptance of Office.”

I was asked the question whether that included general retainers as well as what are called special retainers. At that time the hon. Member for Preston, who knows a good deal but does not know everything, was under the impression that a retainer was the retainer of the solicitor.

MR. HANBURY: What I said was that a retainer for a Railway Company or a company of that kind would cover the cases in which they might engage, but I did not say from a solicitor.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I thereupon pointed out that a retainer was not the retainer of the solicitor but the retainer through the solicitor for a particular client; in other words, that it was the retainer of the client. In regard to the case of general retainers for Railway Companies or other bodies of the sort the question was asked, Are the Law Officers to act upon such retainers? My answer was Yes, they are entitled to do so, but speaking for myself, I should not act upon any general retainer for a Railway Company or any other similar body in frequent litigation.

MR. HANBURY: Both Law Officers?

SIR C. RUSSELL: My colleague was not here, but I added that I had not the least doubt that he would come to the same conclusion. I have never admitted that we should not be entitled to do this as a right, so far as it is consistent with the discharge of our public duties. But, as I say, we have not insisted upon it. The hon. Gentleman has said that under this new arrangement enormous fees are paid to the Law Officers of the Crown for the contentious work that they do—fees vastly in excess of what they got under the old system. I only wish that that were true. My clerk has furnished me with five specimen cases showing the amount of fees paid by the private litigants as against those paid by a liberal Treasury and by an extravagant Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, it is said, does not safeguard the Public Purse, to the Law Officers of the Crown. The counsel engaged in those five cases were Sir Horace Davey, Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Henry James, Mr. Findlay, and Sir

Richard Webster—counsel who are leading men at the Bar and of the same standing as ourselves. The total fees paid in those cases to the leading private counsel were 585 guineas. According to the hon. Member for Preston, the counsel for the Crown ought to have had at least 585 guineas. He received, as a fact, 235 guineas. Therefore, I complain that under the parsimonious influence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer the Treasury do not act up to the spirit of the Minute.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Did the counsel for the Crown appear?

SIR C. RUSSELL: Yes, they did appear; and not only did they appear, but they are not even entitled to be briefed, and are not briefed, unless they are expected to appear.

MR. HANBURY: Was this amount divided between the five counsel, or did they each get 585 guineas?

SIR C. RUSSELL: The total fees in the five or six cases I have mentioned paid to the private counsel were 585 guineas. The amount paid by the Treasury to the Law Officer of the Crown was 235 guineas; in other words, considerably less than half. Therefore, it is all moonshine—this extravagant and ridiculous statement about the enormous fees paid to the Law Officers. I feel a little strongly upon this point, because I have taken the liberty of insisting that, if it is a proper provision of the arrangement that the counsel for the Crown should be paid fees in contentious business at all, it is not right they should be paid on an inferior scale for the same class of work. Therefore, it is that in the Minute it expressly provides that in contentious business the counsel are to be paid such fees as counsel of like standing would properly expect to receive from clients under like circumstances. The figures I have quoted show that the Minute is not acted up to by the Treasury.

MR. HANBURY: But the new scale was an advance upon the fees previously paid.

*SIR C. RUSSELL: I have shown the hon. Member how this proposed new scale works out in fact and in practice. Now, with regard to Chamber practice. Let me say for myself that I do not believe I have earned or received five guineas for Chamber practice since I

became a Law Officer of the Crown, nearly two years ago. My hon. and learned Friend's business in advising was always greater than mine. He will tell you that he has practically abandoned giving opinion in Chambers altogether—not that he has not the right to do so, but because of the demands on his time by reason of his public duties. As the House knows, I was not in favour of the change personally, and I came into the arrangement with a certain amount of unwillingness; but I feel bound to say that with the enormous increase of business of a public character which the Law Officers have to deal with, especially within the last five or six or 10 years, I believe this Minute points in the right direction, and that in order to do the public work well the Law Officers of the Crown must be practically confined to the discharge of their public duties. I say this, although I felt, and feel, strongly that the Law Officers of the Crown should be, in fact, the leaders of the Bar as well as the titular leaders of the Bar. Now with regard to general retainers. It happens, in my case, that I have a general retainer for a very large number of newspapers in London. In the case of the hon. Member for Northampton, for whom I have had the honour of acting for many years, and who has been considerably engaged in litigation, I have had recently, in the Zierenberg case, to refuse to act upon a general retainer. Only a few days ago Sir E. Lawson, of *The Daily Telegraph*, was brought up for alleged contempt of Court. I have had also the honour of a general retainer for that journal for many years, but in this case I felt that I could not act upon it, because it came within the category of clients who may be in frequent litigation. I could mention many other illustrations. Now I come to the next question. With regard to the Sutherland case, my retainer from the present Duke, the then Marquess of Stafford, was given on the 29th of January, 1892. I did not accept Office until the 20th August, 1892. That general retainer was in relation to litigation between himself and the late Duke—I am sorry to go into all this—which litigation was considered important in the interests of the Marquess of Stafford, and which has culminated in the disputed will case

now pending. The state of the facts is, that I received the retainer on the 29th of January, 1892; I accepted Office on the 20th of August, 1892; the late Duke died on the 27th of September, 1892; and the Treasury Minute is dated the 5th of December, 1892. These are the exact facts. I received the Salt Union retainer on the 10th of May, 1892; the writ in the specific action was issued on the 11th of July, 1892; and as I have said, I did not accept Office until the 20th of August, 1892. Now, I do ask whether it is not monstrous, in view of these facts, to make such a charge as the hon. Member has made? Not only have we acted up to the letter, but I say we have acted entirely up to the spirit of this Minute. I know, speaking both for my learned Colleague and myself, that our sacrifices have been considerable. We have tried, in discharge of our public duties, to do our best, and certainly with the most thorough desire to fulfil them in good faith. The point of this Resolution is an assertion on the part of the hon. Member, which, if he will forgive me for so saying, he ought not lightly to make, that the arrangement made has been widely departed from by the Law Officers. I absolutely deny that there is any foundation for such an assertion, and I assert again that we have acted entirely up to the spirit of this Minute.

*MR. J. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) said, the Motion conveyed to the House the idea that the Law Officers of the Crown had trespassed beyond the limit with regard to private practice. That was an accusation which it was necessary to meet, and he was bound in fairness to say that the hon. and learned Member in the cases mentioned had given an effective answer. But after all, that was not the real question. The real question was, what was the amount of public money which the Law Officers of the Crown were receiving from year to year?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that was not the question which was raised by this Amendment.

MR. J. POWELL WILLIAMS was not proposing to argue that question now, which must be raised at another time upon a specific Motion to reduce the Vote for the remuneration of the Law Officers. He might be allowed to say, however,

that there was a prevalent impression that the present arrangement gave the Law Officers of the Crown no less a sum annually than about £27,000. If that was so, it would be a very serious matter for the House to consider, when the proper time arrived, and it would then have to be determined whether that was a rate of payment which could be continued. They could get three Archbishops for that sum, and the House would have to consider whether the services of two Law Officers of the Crown were of equal value to those of three such eminent ecclesiastics. This matter could not be allowed to rest where it was, for there was a far wider and more important question behind it, which, if nobody else would do so, he would raise when the proper time arrived.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, when the time came to vote upon the remuneration of the Law Officers he should have no hesitation in regard to the Lobby he should go into. However, that was not what the House had then to deal with. What they had to do with at the moment was a deliberate accusation against the Law Officers of the Crown of having done for their own personal advantage that which they ought not to have done, and which he certainly ought to have restrained them from doing under the terms of the Treasury Minute.

MR. HANBURY said, he had distinctly stated that he made no charge whatever against the Attorney General, but that the Treasury Minute had not been conformed with. That was all he had said.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, the hon. Member had said quite enough, and a great deal too much, on the subject. He had made an accusation, for which he had no foundation whatever, against two as honourable men as ever filled these important Public Offices—made it on grounds as ridiculous as they were unfounded. He had referred to the mare's nest called the Sutherland case, and had asked whether the proceedings of the Attorney and Solicitor General had been watched, and whether they were entitled or not to the fees they took. He could only inform the hon. Member that he had other things to do, and that that was no part of his duty. He had simply, knowing the Attorney and Soli-

citor General to be men of honour and integrity, handed to them the Treasury Minute, relying upon them to act upon it both in letter and spirit. They had acted upon it both in letter and spirit, and the accusation that they had departed from it was baseless—founded upon no facts whatever; and he asked the House without further discussion to negative the Motion.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, that no such charge as the right hon. Gentleman had stated had been made against the Attorney General. The allegation was that a Treasury Minute having laid down the conditions under which the Law Officers of the Crown were henceforth to be employed and remunerated, the meaning of that Minute, so far as appeared to any outside layman, had been departed from. How did it start? It started by saying that an arrangement had been made—and this was the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—limiting the business in which a Law Officer might appear as counsel for private clients to cases in the House of Lords and Privy Council. The whole Minute was founded upon that principle; that was the main part of it, and the rest was mere ornament. Was the Duke of Sutherland's case a case before the House of Lords or Privy Council? Certainly not. It was the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who had just run away from the House) to satisfy himself whether the cases mentioned came within the true meaning of the Minute or not. The Attorney General had given illustrations of a case in which larger fees were paid to the other counsel than to the Law Officers. Yes, but the other counsel had not £13,000 a year, like the Attorney and Solicitor General, to divide between them. That fact had a very important bearing upon the case. What was complained of was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not performed his duty as guardian of the Public Purse. The right hon. Gentleman was always inveighing against extravagance, but in this particular instance he had not acted properly as guardian of the public money. As to the question of general retainer, they quite understood the principle which the Attorney General had laid down, that he and his colleague had a right to accept general retainers from public

companies exposed to constant litigation, though they did not exercise that right. But the Attorney General was not the judge in the matter. The Treasury Minute laid down the broad principle he had stated. Foreseeing, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer did, that questions might arise it laid down two things—first, that any question arising should be submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose decision should be final; and, secondly, that a copy of the Minute should be sent to each of the Law Officers. When the question was raised whether the Duke of Sutherland's case came within the Minute, the Attorney General and Solicitor General knew that it was their duty to submit the case to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was not done, and thereby they had all failed in their duty. The Law Officers had acted upon what they conceived to be their right, but they were not the judges; the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the judge, but again in this as in many another case the right hon. Gentleman had abandoned his post and had not fulfilled the duty imposed upon him.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question again proposed.

QUARANTINE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES called attention to the system of quarantine. He said, the late President of the Local Government Board and he had had a difference upon this matter. What was quarantine? As a means of preventing the spread of disease by infection it was ridiculous. Forty days were prescribed, as though "forty" had some magic in it? He might refer to the lazaretto which had been built on the Chetney Hills in Kent, to which persons were sent who were likely to convey infectious disease to Her Majesty's subjects. Quarantine did not only extend under the Act 6 Geo. III. c. 7 to yellow fever, as the late President of the Local Government Board had stated; on the contrary, yellow fever was never mentioned at all in either that or succeeding Acts, except in an exceptional manner. Quarantine applied to any infectious disease or distemper highly dangerous to the health of His Majesty's subjects. It included cholera, and might be held to apply to

swine fever. The provisions for carrying it out were the most ridiculous, oppressive, expensive methods ever made in a civilised country. What was our system for protecting people from infection? We had four old hulks in the Solent, where they were established originally because vessels came generally to Southampton from the Mediterranean coast of Africa or Turkey, where the plague was supposed usually to exist. The lazaretto in Kent he had already referred to. Those were the means employed to prevent the spread of infection. But what was the case now? For one person who reached this country by way of the Solent hundreds and thousands came by Dover, Harwich, and other parts along the coasts. If we were going to maintain a system of quarantine it should, in the first place, be extended to the cholera; and, in the second, preventive methods should be applied where they were most needed, at the points of largest influx of foreigners into this country. It was perfectly ridiculous if we were to allow streams of people to come in by Folkestone, Dover, Harwich, and so on without question, to maintain those four crazy old hulks in the Solent. Such a system of quarantine afforded no protection whatever to the country against the spread of infectious diseases. If we were to have quarantine at all the matter could not stop where it was, because the great streams of foreigners now entering the country were untouched by our present system. But even supposing it were intended to make the system a reality instead of a sham, he very much questioned the wisdom of so doing, for quarantine did no good, but on the contrary it did a great deal of harm. Persons coming by sea required less quarantine than others, having by their voyage automatically quarantined themselves, so to speak. Confining people for a number of days in a ship or lazaretto was eminently calculated to spread any germs of disease if they existed or to produce them if they did not. Ridiculous as the present system was, even if made more effective, it would still be bad, for it would not prevent the spread of infectious diseases. He ventured to say no one on the opposite Benches could tell the House why such a system was kept up. No doubt abroad it was maintained as a kind of system of outdoor relief for

Mr. Gibson Bowles

Vice Consuls, providing them with fees in lieu of paying them salaries. For instance, the Spanish Government required a health certificate to be *viséd* at a charge of a few shillings by the Vice Consul of the place—an unnecessary *visé* by a person who did not know and could not know that a certificate given by a person who did know was correct. If the right hon. Gentleman was going to abandon his system of quarantine and call in the assistance of the Local Government Board, that would be a clear confession that his system was of no use; but if he intended to try and make it of use, let him apply it as the Act intended it should be applied. In that case, instead of having £1,600 or £1,700 put on the Estimates for quarantine expenses, the cost would be spread over the whole country. He had said enough to show that the present quarantine system was extremely useless, ridiculous, and expensive, and ought to be abolished. The time had arrived when we must either extend or abandon altogether this ancient system of quarantine, and he would be glad of an assurance from the Government on the subject, or that at all events they would promise the familiar remedy of a Select Committee. The only explanation of this old system having been allowed to go on was that its existence had been forgotten. For more than 100 years we had put up with it, but the time had come when an end should be put to an ancient and stagnant abuse.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I do not think the hon. Member opposite is quite justified in saying that the Act of George IV. contemplates yellow fever simply. It applies to infectious diseases.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he had stated that it was not exclusive of them.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, there had been five cases of vessels detained through yellow fever during the last few years, but such cases could be quite well dealt with under the Ordinances relating to the public health. That being so, it did not appear that there was any necessity, from the point of view of public health, for maintaining the quarantine law. The Government, however, were bound by certain Conventions with other Powers to maintain the quarantine regulations. In consequence of the Debate that arose on the Civil Service Estimates last Autumn, the

Government had been giving their attention to the matter, and the Local Government Board had been in correspondence with the Departments concerned on the subject. Inquiries were being made as to the attitude of Foreign Powers, and as soon as replies were received to those inquiries the Government would be able to deal with the question. He did not think it would be necessary to have a Select Committee such as the hon. Member had suggested. Probably a Departmental Committee would be better. As he had said, however, the Government were bound by the Conventions, and until they obtained the views of the Foreign Governments could not act. They agreed that there was no longer any sanitary reason for maintaining a system which was to a large extent practically obsolete. He hoped, therefore, that the hon. Member would be satisfied to leave the matter in the hands of the Government. It was receiving the attention of the Government, and would certainly not be lost sight of.

IMPROVEMENTS IN NON-BOARD SCHOOLS.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston), who had given notice of the following Motion:—

“That this House is of opinion that full and reasonable time, without prejudice to the allowance of grants which may have been earned, should be allowed to non-Board schools, not supported by the rates, for carrying out such material improvements as the Education Department may, after considering all the circumstances, have ordered.”

said, he believed he was precluded from moving it, but he wished to make a few remarks on the subject. Just before the Easter Recess the House had had the advantage of a tolerably free discussion on the subject, during the course of which the Minister for Education (Mr. Acland) gave some assurances which, though they were not perfect, were in some degree satisfactory, for all of which mercies he was infinitely obliged to the right hon. Gentleman. The Motion was, however, placed on the Paper before that discussion took place, and, inasmuch as during the Easter Recess further confirmation had been received for the necessity for having something done, he thought it well to revert to the subject. In his native County of Worcestershire there had been abnormal activity in respect of the

repairs and sanitation of voluntary schools. This was owing to the exceptional vigour of the Inspector who was appointed in that county. So great was the anxiety with regard to the poorer village schools that the rich landlords—if any landlords could in these days be called rich—and many small country gentlemen like himself had been obliged to raise a fund for the purpose of enabling the managers to meet the requirements of the Education Department. In the same way, in the part of Surrey which he represented, the people had been obliged to make great efforts to raise funds in order to meet the requirements of the Department. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Acland) very well knew that somewhat suddenly within the last year or two demands for material improvements which had never previously been pressed had been made. School committees had been going on for generations without any marked complaint being made to the Education Department, and although some further requirements were anticipated when the Free Education Act was passed, a year or so of gradual progress elapsed after its passage, and it was not until the present Government came into Office that demands were urged with what he regarded as exceptional and abnormal vigour. The schools to which the demands applied were, of course, more or less poor, and those who supported them were suffering from agricultural depression. He was sure that the vivid and graphic description recently given of them by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) would be still fresh in the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman. It was under these circumstances of poverty and depression that the school managers were required to redouble their efforts for improving the buildings. The demands which had been made upon them were of such a character as in their opinion to endanger their position. They were apprehensive that they would not be able to raise the funds needed within the requisite time. No complaints were made respecting the efficiency of their school management. Their management was admitted to be good. They actually were making greater progress relatively than the Board schools, who had all the advantages of the rates to fall back upon. It was considered to be hard that at a

time when, despite all the enervating and depressing influences of the day, they had managed to maintain their schools in a state of efficiency which if it was equalled was scarcely surpassed by the Board schools, pressure should be put upon them for what was, after all, a very secondary matter. That was the shell of the grievance, so to speak—the framework of the educational picture painted by skilful artists with the best of colours. It was for the sake of the frame that the picture was being imperilled. It did seem hard that when schools were kept up by voluntary effort they should be placed in a position of pecuniary embarrassment for the sake of such matters as the provision of a cloak-room or a few hat-pegs. Those things as affecting sanitation, he ventured to say, were grossly exaggerated. The idea of the health of the children being endangered by reason of a few wet cloaks being hung up about the place was really absurd. He admitted that cloak-rooms and hat-pegs should be provided, but to say that the health of the children was placed in jeopardy by the absence of these things was ridiculous. Look at the children—at their vigorous gait and rosy cheeks. They were far healthier than the children under the London School Board. Was there any danger to their health? Of course not. The provision of cloak-rooms, and so on, was not urgent. The want of them was not likely to provoke epidemics or juvenile complaints. The children on the whole were healthy, and on the whole were progressive, and on the whole were doing well. Why, then, should the schools be worried to death for the sake of material improvements of a secondary character? There was this further grievance—that the buildings were erected with the approval of the Education Department of their day, and had existed under similar sanction for more than one generation. There could be no particular reason—in the present year, at any rate—for enforcing these hitherto unprecedented demands. He (Sir R. Temple) and his friends submitted that the schools had claims of the first character on the Estimates. These were the schools that existed before Board schools were known. They were the pioneers of education in the country. They held up the light of

Sir R. Temple

knowledge at a time when there was general darkness among the humbler classes; and these were the institutions that had provided a vast amount of educational capital for school buildings—to be counted by many millions sterling—and these were the institutions which now for several generations had saved the pockets of the taxpaying rate-payers. They were saving the rate-payers now, at a time when all other rates was rising. He did not say they saved much to the taxpayer. They received as much as the Board schools, but they saved the ratepayer. And, further, they maintained the good old English idea—differentiating from Scotland and Ireland, and every other nationality under the sun in the employment of private enterprise in the sacred cause of education. Elsewhere these things were done by the State, but in this country they were largely done by private enterprise. This gave them a claim upon the nation. They did not deny that material progress must be made and go on *pari passu* with moral and intellectual progress. Poor as they were they were willing to make these material improvements, but they asked to be allowed reasonable time for the purpose. It made all the difference next year or the year after—that was to say, compared with the present year—between death or survival. That was the point. It was time they asked for. They even ventured to demand it, and they ventured to conclude their plea with the assertion, “Have patience with us and we will make thee all the improvements that are fairly to be required of us.” It was in order to obtain, if possible, some additional assurance from the right hon. Gentleman and also to show their educational friends who were regarding this question with great anxiety in all parts of the country that they in the House who were in favour of the voluntary system were not silent, but were firm in urging their case that he again brought this subject before the right hon. Gentleman—though he was precluded from moving a Resolution.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I do not want to say anything discourteous to the hon. Baronet and his friends, but to raise the question for the third time within the seventh

Parliamentary day is really a little hard on the Minister in charge of the subject. On both previous occasions I have done my best not merely to receive the statements made with sympathy, but to show, by the announcement I made as to the Returns I proposed to obtain and the Circulars I was going to publish, that I honestly mean to try and meet in some reasonable degree hon. Members themselves. I hope the hon. Baronet opposite will pardon me for saying that I am not prepared to go again into the general question. I know that my statements have been considered satisfactory by those interested in voluntary schools from the many letters I have received from clergymen and others. If the hon. Member had been able to move the Motion I should not have been able to accept it, as it would draw a distinction between Board and voluntary schools as to the way in which they are to be treated in this matter. What the Education Department has to do is to adapt its demands to the circumstances of the case, and that is what it is prepared to try and do; but a Motion which would give a special position to the voluntary schools is one that could not, and would not, be accepted by the House. It is the duty of every Minister of Education to see that in return for the enormous grants that are made to these schools by the country the schools shall be healthy and in a good condition. And if hon. Members desire information as to the condition of some of the voluntary schools I should advise them to read the addresses of the President and members of the National Union of Teachers. The hon. Baronet and his friends accepted in the most friendly spirit what I formerly promised, and I am not prepared to say anything more on the subject.

GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) said, the right hon. Gentleman had referred to the remarks which had been made on this subject on previous occasions. Well, many of them entertained strong feelings on the subject of the voluntary schools. Many people did not care about children being educated at all if they were not educated in voluntary schools. Even when Board schools were close to them they sent their children long distances to voluntary schools. They paid rates to maintain the Board schools, but derived no advantage from them. He

had himself contributed largely to Board schools, but he also contributed to voluntary schools, in which he was more immediately interested. While no objection was raised to pay for Board schools, those persons who supported voluntary schools felt that they had not the same advantages as compared with the Board schools, of dipping into the ratepayers' pockets. In the past they knew that an endeavour had been made to run down the voluntary schools by means of the Board schools, in which low fees were charged. This was done in his district, but it was felt that religious education was necessary for the children. Whilst accepting the statement of the Vice President of the Council, that he was anxious to be fair to all classes of schools, they could not refrain from pointing out that in such serious times of agricultural depression as the present some consideration should be paid to the voluntary schools if only for the sake of saving the pockets of the ratepayers. He did not say any more than the right hon. Gentleman, that they should have the voluntary schools in an insanitary condition or with worse internal arrangements than the Board schools, but he held that alterations which were not absolutely necessary should be postponed or spread over a number of years. The supporters of the voluntary schools did not wish to see such schools crushed by unnecessary demands being made upon them.

Main Question, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (ESTIMATES), 1894-5.

CLASS I.

1. £31,526, to complete the sum for Royal Palaces and Marlborough House.

MR. A. C. MORTON desired to call attention to one or two matters on the Vote for Royal Palaces, and to ask for a little information. He would first, however, congratulate his right hon. Friend on his appointment as First Commissioner of Works, and express the hope that

General Goldsworthy

they might expect a little more sympathy from him than they got from the old hand. With regard to the Windsor Royal Kitchen Garden, he saw there was down in the Vote £1,015, as against £978 last year. He was always careful not to say much about Palaces which were occupied by Her Majesty, and he had no desire to alter the arrangements made when she came to the Throne. He could not, however, see why they should keep up the kitchen garden. Surely that ought to be kept up by the Civil List, and he should like to know why they were asked to pay for the garden? The next item was Kensington Palace, £2,415, as against £2,125 last year. There was no explanation of that increase as far as he could see. He objected to their being asked to pay for the repair of these Palaces at all. These buildings belonged to the nation, but they gave up their use of them. The Queen nominated certain persons to reside in such Palaces, and, living there rent free, the very least that could be expected from them was that they would keep them in a good state of repair. The people who occupied the Palaces were well-to-do and did not require to receive this kind of outdoor relief; but, in addition to this, it was not fair to call upon the already too-heavily taxed people of this country to pay for the expenses of repairing these Palaces. There was an increase in the expenditure of over £600 in regard to the White Lodge, Richmond Park. He should like to know who occupied the White Lodge, and why they were called upon to pay this sum? The same remarks applied to Pembroke Lodge and the other buildings enumerated in the Votes. He desired explanations on these points. The next item to which he wished to refer was in respect of Holyrood Palace. He had for a number of years been calling attention to the bad state of repair of the Scottish Palaces and Castles, but so far he had got little sympathy from the Government. He hoped the present First Commissioner of Works would take some little interest in these buildings, and sympathise with the desire to have them kept in a proper state of repair. They were now, he was sorry to say, to some extent tumbling to pieces. With regard to the chapel that used to be attached to Holyrood Palace, the roof had tumbled

in, and the building gone to ruins. He suggested that something like £10,000 a year should be taken for 10 years to put these Palaces and Castles into a proper state of repair. He would ask the First Commissioner to visit Holyrood and Linlithgow Palaces during the summer, and he would be satisfied that their present condition was a disgrace to the nation, and that they sorely needed repair. Part of Edinburgh Palace came under this Vote, and that structure also required some money spending on it to put it in good repair. A Mr. Nelson, a citizen of Edinburgh, formerly spent £20,000 out of his own pocket, not to embellish or decorate it, but to put it into a decent state of repair and prevent it falling to pieces. It was disgraceful that it should be necessary for a private citizen to do any such thing. Part of Edinburgh Castle was sold to a Railway Company some time ago, and the purchase money so received, instead of being spent on the building, had been put into the capital account of the Royalty fund. It was through the exertions of the Edinburgh Corporation that they got that money, and the least that could be expected was that the money so obtained should be spent in connection with the repair of that part of Edinburgh Castle under the charge of the First Commissioner of Works.

MR. THORNTON did not often find himself in accord with the hon. Member for Peterborough, but on this matter of Scotch Palaces and Castles he was most thoroughly in agreement with him. He had visited Holyrood in the course of an historical tour he made over Scotland last year, and there was a danger of the chapel and other parts of the building falling into a state of disrepair, which would be disgraceful to this country. After all, if there was no absolute engagement made at the time of the Union to keep these Palaces and Castles in repair he considered it to be a moral responsibility. Holyrood was of profound historical interest in Scotland—indeed, it did not sink beneath that of Royal Windsor itself. Such an important historical building as Holyrood should be kept up, and the necessary funds found for that purpose.

MR. HANBURY desired some information in regard to the large expenditure of £8,500 required for new drainage

at Buckingham Palace. He had very often had to complain of the serious danger and risk to health and life in our Public Offices on the part of the Civil servants engaged in such Offices. The condition of the War Office a few years ago was disastrous owing to the bad state of the drainage, and now they had the matter come home to Buckingham Palace itself. Of course, when the health of the Royal Family and Royal visitors at Buckingham Palace was concerned it was a serious thing. The fact that the drainage was in such a bad condition as to require the expenditure of £8,500 emphasised the desirability of a public inquiry into the condition of our Public Buildings, most of which he believed to be in a thoroughly insanitary state. The Government ought to set an example in this respect, and have buildings in such a sanitary state that those who worked or lived in them should not have their health endangered or injured. He did not grudge this amount. He could quite believe the money would be well spent, and he should like to see more going in the same direction, but the Government must not ask them to vote such large sums in the dark. This item appeared in the Votes for the first time.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): It appeared last year.

MR. HANBURY said, they did not have any explanation last year, and he hoped, therefore, they should be told what had been the defects in the drainage of Buckingham Palace, how the money would be expended, and whether sufficient guarantees would be taken that this would be a final sum?

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) desired to know what system of drainage it was proposed to introduce at Buckingham Palace? The drainage system was remodelled some years ago, and the system known as the pneumatic system, which had always worked with great satisfaction, was introduced. Was that the system which it was now proposed should be adopted? With regard to the Windsor Royal Kitchen Garden, he noticed that there was an increased charge this year. What became of the produce of this kitchen garden? The Royal Family were very seldom in residence there, and he should like to know

who got the benefit of the produce of the kitchen garden? If it found its way to Covent Garden, or if anything was made out of it, why should it not be applied in the reduction of the expenses.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES remarked that the Secretary to the Treasury was, no doubt, aware that Windsor Castle was not the property of the Sovereign as such, neither was it personal, but it was the Palace of the Order of the Garter, and was occupied by the Sovereign not as Queen of England but as head of the Order of the Garter, and if it were a conceivable thing that any other Sovereign could be the head of the Order of the Garter, that Sovereign would occupy the Palace at Windsor; consequently, it did seem to him that Windsor Castle stood in a somewhat different position to Buckingham and St. James's Palaces, which were no doubt personal Palaces—personal to the Sovereign as Sovereign. He was not sure whether, if the strict right of the matter were followed out, Windsor Castle should not be charged with the other paraphernalia of the Garter, of which they made a separate Vote in other departments of the Estimates. There was another subject to which he wished to call attention. For many years there had been two services held in St. James's Chapel, one at 10 o'clock in the morning, to which everybody was admitted, and another at 12, for which tickets were required. The 10 o'clock service, which he had long been in the habit of attending, was a most beautiful service, conducted with the utmost dignity and propriety, and had been regularly held up to last year. At the time of the Royal Marriage last year both services were interrupted at St. James's Chapel Royal, and were transferred to the German Chapel, of which he would only say that neither in propriety, in acoustic qualities, nor in appearance, was it at all comparable with the other, and, instead of being a delight and a pleasure to attend the service there, as it was at St. James's Chapel, it was rather a trial of patience.

THE CHAIRMAN: That question does not arise on this Vote.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that he only wished to complain that while part of the service had been restored to St. James's Chapel, the beautiful 10

o'clock service was carried on in the German Chapel, and was spoiled by the acoustic properties of the chapel. He, therefore, hoped that the First Commissioner of Works would see his way to restoring the service to the Chapel Royal.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) said, he was not aware why the change in the service in the Chapel Royal alluded to by the last speaker had been made, but he would inquire into the matter. The expenditure on the kitchen garden of Windsor Castle was for structural improvements, and the outlay upon Kensington Palace was attributable to ordinary repairs. The expenditure in connection with the White Lodge, Richmond Park, which was in the occupation of the Duke of Teck, was owing to the decrease in the water supply in the well. In order to insure an adequate supply in case of fire it was found necessary to expend several hundred pounds. In regard to Holyrood Palace, he quite agreed with the historic importance of the old ruin, and it would be his duty to look very closely into that matter. His predecessor in Office had, however, satisfied himself that there was no danger from deterioration, and the Surveyor of the Office of Works, who had gone very carefully into it, had said that there was no ground for apprehension. He would undertake that the whole condition of the building should be carefully watched, and a further Report called for in the course of the year. In regard to Buckingham Palace, the underground drains had all been taken up, the line altered, and new pipes put in on the best system. The item this year was, no doubt, very heavy, but was calculated to cover the cost of all the heavy work. He would endeavour to profit by the remarks of the hon. Member for Preston on the subject of drainage generally. Complaint had also been made of the condition of the buildings of the War Office. Those buildings were very old, but before very long the War Department would have a new house in which the sanitary system would be as satisfactory as sanitary science could make it. The question as to what became of the produce of the Windsor Royal Kitchen Gardens was outside his province, as it was a private matter.

Mr. Conybeare

MR. A. C. MORTON thanked the right hon. Gentleman for the way in which he had met them in regard to Holyrood. As to the occupants of the White Lodge, if their well-water gave out, why should they not have the Water Company's supply laid on, and pay water-rates, just as other people had to do? They got the house rent free, and the least they might do was to pay the water rate. He also thought that the occupants of the buildings, to which the Queen had the right of nomination—such as the White Lodge, Sheen Lodge, and Straw Lodge—should be obliged to keep them in a state of repair. An arrangement had been made by which these people were obliged to keep the buildings in repair inside, and he thought they might be asked to look after the outside as well, as they had the houses rent free.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether the Observatory at Kew was the place to which chronometers and nautical instruments were sent to be tested? He noticed under the heading of "Palaces"—stud-house, Hawthorn Lodge and Kew Observatory. The category of Palaces had been greatly extended when they included a stud-house, an observatory, and a lodge.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, he was unable to answer the question of the hon. Member who had just sat down. With regard to the question of the hon. Member for Peterborough, he could not undertake to say that the charge for the outside repairs would be thrown on the occupants of the houses mentioned. The owners of houses usually did the inside repairs, in order to ensure that the buildings were properly preserved.

MR. CONYBEARE asked why the well-conditioned lords and ladies who occupied these Palaces, cottages, lodges, or whatever they were, rent-free did not pay for their "fuel, lights, water, and household articles"? He accepted the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the produce of the Windsor Kitchen Garden. Perhaps Her Majesty had a right to make as much as she could out of the kitchen garden; but surely these people who had those buildings rent-free should pay for light and water and household articles.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, his hon. Friend was under a misapprehension. The occupants of those Palaces did pay for their gas and fuel. The item referred to was for gas and fuel used in the Public Works Department in respect to these edifices.

MR. CONYBEARE said, that raised another question, which was whether the right hon. Gentleman so analysed the accounts as to apportion to each Palace its respective portion of the expense under this head?

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he would like to point out, in answer to the hon. Member for Peterborough, that it would be impossible to ask the Royal occupants of those Palaces to undertake the repair of the outside of the buildings. Those Palaces were national property; they had been erected by the Crown or by Parliament, and no one should be allowed to touch them on the outside except under the authority of Parliament or the Royal authority.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he desired to say, in reply to the question of the hon. Member for Lynn Regis in reference to the Royal Kew Observatory, that the Observatory had been built in 1778 by Sir Thomas' Chambers for George III., but since Her Majesty had come to the Throne she had allowed it to be used by the Royal Society, which looked after the internal repairs, while the outside repairs were done by the Board of Works.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, the hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston did not seem to understand what he had said about the repairs of the Palaces. They had already made an arrangement whereby they compelled the people who lived in those buildings to keep them in repair internally, and he thought the principle should be extended to outside repairs, just as vicars or rectors were obliged to keep parsonage houses, which were also national property, in repair, inside and outside.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he agreed with the hon. Baronet that it was absolutely impossible to allow people to work their fancy on the outside of the Palaces, and that if any work of the kind was needed it should be done by the Board of Works. For instance, if the hon. Member for Peterborough

occupied one of those buildings, he should not like to allow the hon. Member his way on the outside of the house, for he would probably spoil it.

Vote agreed to.

2. £79,228, to complete the sum for Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that last year the First Commissioner of Works had promised him to provide additional seats in Hampton Court Park and Pleasure Gardens, and as the seats were very much required by the public, he would like to know whether the promise had been carried out. He also urged last year that a refreshment booth for the supply of temperance drinks should be erected in those grounds.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : Why limit them to temperance drinks ?

MR. A. C. MORTON replied that a licence would have to be obtained, and that no doubt would be opposed by the public houses, which were kept up by hon. Gentlemen opposite so carefully. At any rate, all he desired was that the public who frequented those Gardens should be able to obtain temperance refreshments. He should also like to ask what became of the thousands of bunches of grapes which grew on the celebrated Vine at Hampton Court? So far as he could make out the grapes went to Windsor—what for he did not know—but as they belonged to the people, he thought the First Commissioner of Works should be able to give them to the hospitals for children in the Metropolis. With regard to Linlithgow Palace, he had again to complain that it was not in a proper state of repair. The walls of the Palace were still in a good and staple condition, and he thought the building might be roofed in and made use of. When Scotland got Home Rule the Palace might be used for the Governor of the country. He had received numerous complaints of the want of sanitary accommodation in Hyde Park, while the open spaces in the charge of the London County Council were admirably supplied in that respect. A little money spent wisely in that way would greatly benefit the people and visitors to London.

MR. CONYBEARE said, he noticed that £400 a year were charged to India, in respect to services rendered to that

country by Kew Botanic and Pleasure Gardens. He should like to know what those services were. Complaint was constantly made about India being overburdened with taxation on behalf of England, and he thought this small sum might very well be paid by this country, rather than be charged to India. It was a mere trifle, and not worth talking about ; but he raised the subject as a question of principle.

MR. THORNTON (Clapham) said, that with regard to Linlithgow Palace, he was aware a considerable difference of opinion existed in Scotland as to the way the building should be treated, and therefore no decision should be come to without careful consideration.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that additional seats had been provided in Hampton Court Gardens, and he would consider the question of providing a Kiosk, as in Kew and other places, for the supply of light refreshments. The grapes of the Vine at Hampton went to their owner, Her Majesty.

MR. CONYBEARE : I thought we were the owner.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that with regard to the £400 charged on India, it was a very trifling matter, but as he had great sympathy with the views expressed by his hon. Friend the Member for Camborne, he would look into the subject. As the hon. Member for Clapham had stated, there was a difference of opinion about the treatment to be given to the ruin at Linlithgow, and apart from that, it was a matter that required careful consideration. The question of sanitary accommodation in Hyde Park would also be attended to.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he would like to know what had become of the Report of the Committee which sat in 1892, and perhaps 1893 also, to inquire into the emoluments of the establishment at Kew Gardens? It would be remembered that the men employed at Kew desired that their emoluments should be rendered equal to the emoluments of similar establishments within the Metropolitan area. It was said that there were certain advantages at Kew, which were not enjoyed in the Metropolitan Parks, and that living was cheaper there. To that the men replied that living was dearer at

Kew, and probably they were right. The Committee was appointed—he thought, under the auspices or executive control of the late Chief Commissioner of Works. For his own part, he had never heard that the labours of the Committee had had any result. Possibly something might have been done, for he had not heard a complaint for the past year or so. It would be satisfactory, however, if some statement were made on the point. In regard to the bill which was brought against India by Kew he believed it to be *bonâ fide*. No doubt Kew Gardens did furnish seeds and specimens for the Botanical Gardens at Calcutta and elsewhere in India.

MR. CONYBEARE said, that if similar services were rendered to the Colonies and not charged for why should India be charged?

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he did not know whether Kew Gardens supplied specimens to the Colonies or not. He would point out that the residents at Kew had a standing grievance in respect of the lofty wall enclosing the Gardens on the south western side. The wall was a great eyesore to the inhabitants of a very long row of houses, and it would be a great boon to them if it could be replaced by iron railings. It might be said that as the removal of the wall would tend solely to the benefit of the residents in the neighbourhood they ought to be asked to defray part of the expense. That clearly was a matter for negotiation between the responsible Minister and the residents. He wished to thank the Government for throwing open the Home Park at Richmond to the inhabitants of Kingston and Surbiton. There was still a question as to whether equestrians were allowed to ride through it or not. He should like to press the Minister in charge of the Vote to concede this privilege.

MR. HANBURY said, that as to this charge in India, though a small one, it was a shabby one. They were far too much inclined to put every charge they could on India. They had seen many evidences of that lately, and he protested against it with the hope of seeing the habit put an end to. The habit was the result of the policy of days gone by, when the House was only too ready to pile up small charges against the Indian

Exchequer. He agreed with the hon. Member for Kingston that, no doubt, India did derive benefit from Kew, but he thought it a little unjust that these charges should be imposed on India, whilst they were not imposed on self-governing or Crown Colonies. If India benefited from Kew, did not Kew, on the other hand, benefit from the Botanical Gardens of India? If so, was not the present arrangement under which India alone was charged rather one-sided? As the Government had promised to consider the matter, he did not think it was worth while going to a Division against the item.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, the hon. Baronet opposite had pointed out that, in consequence of the representations he had made, a Committee had been appointed to consider the emoluments of the labourers at Kew Gardens. The Committee eventually reported. They did not recommend any general rise of wages. They made, however, a number of recommendations with regard to small improvements in the wages of labourers in the Royal Parks generally, and all those recommendations had been carried out. The wages of the labourers at Kew had been raised, not to any great extent, but sufficient to keep them in correspondence with the policy of the Government in regard to other Departments of the Public Service. If it were possible in future to go further and raise the minimum rate of wages throughout the Public Service, the labourers generally at Kew would, of course, participate in the advantage.

MR. CONYBEARE said, he had understood the hon. Gentleman who had replied to him on behalf of the Government to express such sympathy with the view he (Mr. Conybeare) had expressed that he did not think it necessary to press his Motion to a Division.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he agreed that it was ridiculous to make India pay the money to which reference had been made. He hoped no further charge would be made on that account. On another point, so far as his (Mr. Morton's) acquaintance with the Scotch Societies went, they all objected to keeping Holyrood Palace as a ruin. They said they wanted it roofed in—especially the old Parliament House.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, the road in Richmond Park on the east side of Pembroke Lodge was in a bad condition, and very dangerous for riding purposes. It was a series of abysses, and a person riding on it was likely at any moment to come head over heels. It was badly kept, and in wet weather was simply a morass. For years they had been promised an entrance to the Park from London in Priory Lane. The lane ended in a gate, where there was a Royal lodge inhabited by a Royal keeper, who was paid for out of the Estimates. This parkkeeper, when applied to by a person—as he (Mr. Bowles) had himself applied—for egress, said, “I cannot let you go through this gate unless you get the permission of Mr. Hugh Smith, who lives down the lane.” He (Mr. Bowles) did not know who Mr. Hugh Smith was. It was not the Queen of England who was to give permission for a Royal Park Gate to be used; it was not even the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but Mr. Hugh Smith. He took no interest in Mr. Hugh Smith—he only took interest in the Park and in the Estimates. This system of keeping up a Park Gate for the behoof of a private individual who was to give permission to his private friends to use it had been going on for years. They thought last year that it was to be put an end to, but apparently it still continued.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, the hon. Member was quite right about this gate. It was not open to general use, because the road leading to it was private property—the property, he believed, of the landowner to whom the hon. Member had referred. The gentleman, however, was quite ready to hand over the road to the public if some security were given that it would be kept in proper repair. The difficulty was as to who was to repair it. The Local Authorities were certainly the persons who ought to undertake that work. He had entered into communication with them on the subject some time ago, but they were not disposed to keep in repair a road which simply led to a Royal Park. The cost could hardly be placed on the public funds. The owner, Mr. Smith, had made a most generous offer to the public, and it was a pity it could not be availed of.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he wished to call attention to the Vote for keeping Hyde Park in order. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer would agree with him that the money might be spent in a more advantageous manner, for it seemed as if work were purposely made in Hyde Park. Just now the authorities were putting down an expensive stone kerbing which was not only absolutely unnecessary, but which would probably become a source of danger by reason of horses stepping upon it. Why they were putting such a kerbing alongside Rotten Row he could not conceive; they had done without one for centuries, and the only explanation for laying it could only be that there was some money in hand which it was desired to spend.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE: I know nothing against this kerbstone, but I will make inquiry. I may point out to the hon. Member that the Vote covered expenditure in St. James's and other Parks, as well as Hyde Park.

Vote agreed to.

3. £30,855, to complete the sum for Houses of Parliament Buildings.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he noticed a charge for double sashes for the dining and grill-room windows. Similar items appeared on the Estimates two years ago, and he would like to know if the money then voted was expended on different works? He should watch this matter with some suspicion, as he feared there was a tendency to divert money for the purposes for which Parliament granted it. The promise of a Committee to consider the question of the structure and arrangements of the House of Commons rendered it unnecessary for him to go at any length into some of the matters he had intended to discuss. He did think there was a necessity for enlarging the post office, while the store rooms connected with the Vote Office were both ill-lighted and badly ventilated, being really unfit for any one to work in. Next, he wanted to know if the men employed in the House had been granted an eight hours day; surely they ought in this respect to be treated in the same manner as the *employés* in the Army and Navy Departments.

MR. CONYBEARE said, he was glad to hear that a Committee was to be appointed to discuss matters in connection with the arrangements of the House. He quite agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough that the post office was not large enough, and he held further that the staff of clerks was inadequate. But he wished the right hon. Gentleman to direct his attention to the condition of St. Stephen's Crypt Chapel. This was an exceedingly beautiful building, but all who had visited it recently would have noticed that the frescoes and other decorations were becoming frightfully disfigured by damp. It would be a very great pity indeed if the damp were allowed to increase the mischief. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take speedy steps to see that that was put right. There was another department in which he was much interested, and that was the Library. He had repeatedly raised questions as to the provision of which he might call the necessities of their existence. For instance, if they wanted certain Law Reports they had to go to the Lords' Library for them. He objected to having to do that, in view of the friction between the two Houses. Was it not ridiculous that the real legislators should be compelled to go to the House of Lords to look up the records as to the practical effect of their own legislation? During the Debates on the Local Government Bill it was frequently necessary to refer to the Law Reports for decisions on certain points, but the volumes were only to be had from the Lords' Library, and it was often the case that when reference had to be made that Library was closed and the officials had gone home. Now, he was not asking that the shelves of the Library of the House of Commons should be encumbered with a lot of musty old tomes, but he believed that the Council of Legal Education had recently prepared a new edition of Law Reports which had brought within a reasonable compass all the important decisions of the last 30 years, and he thought that that would prove a useful addition to the Library. He was not asking that the edition should be obtained in the interests of the lawyers who came down there to study their briefs, but he advocated it in view of the convenience of hon. Members generally. He wished, finally, to com-

plain of the character of pews placed in the corridors and Library.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) said, he wished to direct the attention of the First Commissioner of Works to the question of the want of accommodation on the floor of the House. This was an inconvenience not experienced by Members and ex-Members of the Government; it was felt solely by private Members. Of course, the Benches on ordinary occasions were not crowded; but there were times on which private Members, unless they could spare time to come down to the House early in the day, found it impossible to get a seat from which they could hear what was going on. He hoped that the Government would take into their serious consideration the question of enlarging the House.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I admit that the occupants of the two Front Benches may not be the best witnesses on this question of the accommodation, but I would suggest to the noble Lord that hon. Members must look at the construction of the House not from the point of view of exceptional occasions, but from the point of ordinary use, when the attendance is nothing like that which would call for the provision of 670 seats. The House, as at present constructed, is not badly designed for every-day purposes; and I am not sure that by endeavouring to secure the convenience of hon. Members during a few exceptional sittings, the convenience of the many would not be sacrificed. That is a point well worthy the consideration of the House at large.

MR. CONYBEARE hoped that neither the present nor future Governments would not go on the line of increasing the size of the House. What they wanted to do was to reduce the number of Members to about 450, which would be sufficient for all legislative purposes; for such a number the accommodation was ample.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford) desired to draw the attention of the First Commissioner of Works to the absence of any means of communication between the House itself and other parts of the building. There ought to be some easy mode of communication between the House and the smoking-room and the Library, instead of Members who

had to deal with a vast mass of correspondence being kept in total ignorance of what was going on in the Chamber. He was well aware of the fact that the Party Whips preferred the present system, as being better calculated to ensure Members voting straight. Some years since, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University was First Commissioner, he, upon the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion, got up a Memorial in favour of some change in this respect, in order to strengthen the right hon. Gentleman's hands against the Treasury. He induced at least half the Members of the House to sign it, and then presented it. The right hon. Gentleman took it away to some foreign watering place to consider, but nothing was done, and he had since regained possession of the document, which he intended to keep as an interesting memento of his first and last effort to get up a Memorial. He believed that the Exchange Telegraph Company offered to supply information of what was going on in the House to the Smoking Room and the Library for a sum of £500 or £600, if an operator and machine could be placed behind the Speaker's Chair, but their offer had not been accepted. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would agree to devote some consideration to this matter.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he desired to strongly confirm what the hon. Member for Camborne had said with regard to the beauty of the architecture of the crypt, which was being destroyed by damp. The chapel was a structure well worthy of preservation in the utmost possible efficiency; it was the finest one of its kind in the Kingdom, and probably could not be surpassed by any structure of its description in the world. The interesting small room used as the cloak-room was also a fine specimen of architecture, and it ought to be kept in a condition worthy of the House of Commons. He complained that the tea room was not sufficiently lighted in the afternoons. Seeing that hon. Members were compelled by reason of their legislative duties to remain within the precincts of the House, he thought they ought at least to have the tea room as well lighted as the tea-rooms in their own houses.

Mr. Radcliffe Cooke

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he wished to support the First Commissioner of Works in the refusal which he hoped the right hon. Gentleman was about to give to the request that the House should be enlarged. In his opinion, the House was quite large enough for the purposes for which it was used. He was entirely opposed to any proposal that would deplete the Benches of that House by supplying information of what was going on in it to hon. Members in the smoking-room or the Library. It was the duty of hon. Members to attend in the House, and they ought not to ensconce themselves in the Library and smoking-rooms. But he was bound to admit that the writing, smoking, dining, and tea-rooms were too small. Hon. Members must eat, drink, and smoke, and sufficient accommodation should be provided for them. The occupants of the Front Benches, he believed, had their private rooms behind the Speaker's Chair, but private Members had no such privileges, and they had to struggle for the writing tables and for the pens in most unseemly fashion. Many people could not write without smoking, and some even could not think without smoking, and he did hold it to be rather hard that the accommodation in this respect should be so restricted. Every Member knew what the smoking-room was like, and the accommodation in that respect should have been doubled or trebled years ago. If two or three other smoking-rooms were provided, they would not be too much. The same thing might be said of the accommodation for writing. There was no doubt about it that the writing and smoking-rooms were most uncomfortably crowded whenever the business occupying the attention of the House was not of very general interest. He hoped that steps would be taken to considerably increase the present quite inadequate accommodation given to hon. Members.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE was understood to point out that it was impossible to alter the windows while the House was sitting, but the work was to be carried out as soon as possible. The question of St. Stephen's Chapel and the chamber adjoining the cloak-room should receive immediate attention. Some minor matters had been alluded to by various hon. Members with regard to

the accommodation of the House, the post office, tea-rooms, and so forth, all of which appeared to him questions that should be settled by the Committee. He had no doubt that the Committee which it was proposed should be appointed would keep in view all questions relating to the general convenience of Members.

MR. CONYBEARE said, he raised the question last year as to the accommodation in the Gallery, and asked whether the Committee, when it was appointed, would see its way to improve the present troublesome restriction which did not allow ladies to be accompanied by their husbands and brothers, but compelled them to sit away by themselves. It was a curious fact that ladies were not regarded as "strangers," and that, therefore, the arrangements which he proposed for their comfort last year were passed over. He trusted this question of better accommodation for ladies visiting the House would be brought forward for discussion before the Committee. Unless the right hon. Gentleman would promise that, he should oppose the appointment of the Committee.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN thought that ladies should only be allowed access to certain portions of the House as now, and not to the Galleries generally all over the body of the House. If the Committee were to be empowered to make alterations in that direction, he would do all he could to prevent the appointment of the Committee at all.

MR. A. C. MORTON, referring to an item for £450 for lamp oil, said, he never saw a lamp in any part of the House, nor could he find out how that sum of money was expended. He hoped some explanation would be given, and if the right hon. Gentleman would inquire into the matter he would probably find that a saving under that head might be effected.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) pointed out that the accommodation set apart for the public was already extremely limited. If ladies were allowed to occupy seats in the Strangers' Gallery, which was already insufficient for the public, he should oppose the innovation. The space at present so limited for the use of the public should not be still further diminished.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, he would see that the question of the oil lamps received proper attention. He did not say the Government could give a day for a discussion, but they were perfectly willing, if it was the wish of the House, to assent to the appointment of a Committee; and he would suggest that some Member might put down a Motion for appointing a Committee for the purpose. The remarks made that evening showed clearly what the wish of many Members was. His idea was that such questions as that of the admission of ladies to the Strangers' Gallery might be referred to a Committee. That question had not been included in the Reference to previous Committees. He did not like to express a personal opinion on the merits of any particular proposal; but it seemed to him that it would be acceptable to Members generally if a representative Committee were appointed to consider the whole question. With regard to the hours of labour of the workpeople employed by the Office of Works in the Houses of Parliament, it was not possible to consider them without reference to all classes of workpeople employed by Government. It was his intention to consider the question as a whole.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he was a Member of the last two Committees upon whose recommendations certain changes had been made. When the appointment of another Committee was proposed he would suggest "Let there be a discussion, so that it might be known what it was desired that the Committee should consider." On the last Committee the question arose whether the wording of the Reference would allow the Committee to consider the admission of ladies to the Strangers' Gallery, and it was decided that it would not. A discussion would now be the best means of elucidating the points to be considered by the Committee. As to the expenditure for oil, each succeeding First Commissioner had his attention drawn to it and gave the same answer—that the matter should be looked into. He did not know what troubled waters were calmed by the oil provided, or what light was thrown upon their proceedings by this expenditure of £1,300.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) thought the First Commissioner was under some misapprehension in treating the question of eight hours a day for those employed about the Houses of Parliament as part of the larger general eight hours question, because he understood they were not Government servants at all. They were in the hands of that mysterious Commission mentioned the other day, whose existence was unknown to the Members of it. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman could not get out of an answer on the general plea he had given, as they were not Government officials, and the House was entitled to some explanation from the right hon. Gentleman upon this particular Vote—how the servants about the Houses of Parliament would be dealt with in this particular matter.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that the persons he referred to were employed directly by the Office of Works.

SIR J. GOLDSMID (St. Pancras) said, the question of the accommodation for Members was not left in a satisfactory position. If a Committee was to be moved for, it ought to be moved for by the Minister responsible for the arrangements. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to show a little more backbone in the matter; and if there were to be a Committee appointed, to move for it himself rather than leave the responsibility to any individual Member. He made that suggestion in a friendly spirit, and trusted the right hon. Gentleman would accept it.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, the only desire of the Government was to meet the general convenience of Members. He should be ready to put down a Motion for a Committee on the understanding that the Government were not prepared to make any promise as to giving time for a discussion.

SIR J. GOLDSMID did not think that the few minutes that might be devoted to the discussion of the terms of the Resolution would be a serious loss of time to the Government.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said, that last Session he had so many applications from his constituents for admission to the House that at one time he had 100 names on his list. If ladies also were to be admitted to the Galleries he would have nothing else to do but keep a list of applicants.

MR. HERBERT (Croydon) regretted that of the several demands made upon the Government by the Refreshment Committee only one was provided for. All the alterations and improvements which had been suggested were postponed; and this was particularly disappointing to Members as regarded the suggested communication between the dining-room and the kitchen, for by that alteration alone could any real improvement in the arrangements be effected.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, that no Public Body, whether County Council, local, or otherwise, would be so slow in moving. It had always taken years and years before anything was done, and he felt sure, unless some effort were made, these matters would again take four or five years in carrying out.

Vote agreed to.

4. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £31,200, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1895, for the Extension of the Admiralty Buildings."

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY asked how it came about that the original Estimate of £195,000 had been exceeded by £100,000?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES thought that the new buildings promised to be a very handsome pile, but it was disappointing that their completion should be so long delayed. Until they were completed the much-needed thoroughfare between the Mall and Charing Cross could not be made for the enormous traffic between the lower part of Regent Street and the Strand.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN pointed out to the hon. Member that that was not the question before the House.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES explained that the failure to open a thoroughfare arose from the delay in carrying out the Admiralty buildings, and he pressed for accelerated speed that the traffic might be relieved. In that respect the delay in completing the buildings was very serious, and he would be glad of an assurance from the right hon. Gentleman in the matter.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that the increased cost of the buildings had been

due partly to a considerable rise in wages and in the cost of material, but more particularly to the necessity for laying the foundations deeper than had been at first anticipated. The buildings were by far the best Government Offices which had yet been built. As to the opening from the Mall to Charing Cross, that could not be made until the present block was completed. The question would then be considered. He could not enter into the matter more fully now, because a large expense was entailed, and it depended upon financial considerations as to how quickly the work could be pushed forward in future years.

MR. HERBERT said, he had noticed on the east side of the building an extraordinary cupola, which in two days had disappeared again. Might he ask for an assurance that it would not be adopted as a permanent portion of the structure? He noticed that there was a sum of £5,000 down in respect of Block 1 for the removal of the staff of the Admiralty. Did the right hon. Gentleman contemplate the removal of any portion of the staff into the new building during the present year?

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, he hoped that might be done. With regard to the cupola, he was bound to say that the first inquiry he made upon entering the Office of Works was with regard to the structure to which the hon. Gentleman opposite had alluded. The architect came to the conclusion that the base of the cupola was too heavy, the finial too high, and that the curves were wrong. The alteration was being carried out now.

MR. HERBERT: Will there be another experimental exhibition of the cupola?

MR. H. GLADSTONE: I do not know that it will be necessary, after the experience from the section that was put up.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he did not pretend to lay the responsibility upon his right hon. Friend, who was now First Commissioner of Works, but it appeared to him that there was great delay with regard to these buildings. It might be thought that they were saving money; but they were not doing that, and instead were losing money, because of the rent they had to pay for the wretched old rooms in which much of their business had now to be transacted. He hoped

the Government would push on these works as fast as they could, and he believed they could do so without loss to the Public Purse. With regard to the foundations and extra basement, it seemed to him very extraordinary that the cost should amount to £110,000, or more than 50 per cent. of the original Estimate. He should like to have some details as to what was being done with the money. He had said that the First Commissioner was not responsible for the matters he had mentioned, but he was, at all events, responsible now for carrying on the work as fast as possible.

MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University) said, that last year when they were discussing this question the then First Commissioner of Works held out a rather gloomy prospect as to the time when this Admiralty building would be completed. He said it would take two years from that time to finish Block 1 and seven years to finish Block 2.

MR. SHAW - LEFEVRE: What I said was that it would take two years before the second block was commenced.

MR. PLUNKET said, he did not wish to insist upon his recollection as against that of the right hon. Gentleman. He was glad to see from the preliminary statement affixed to the Estimates that it was hoped the first block would be finished at the end of the summer or at the beginning of autumn. If that were so, it would be very satisfactory if some hope could be held out that the second prediction of the First Commissioner of Works would not turn out so badly as he feared. It seemed an extraordinary thing that it should take seven years to complete this block.

MR. SHAW - LEFEVRE: What I said was that seven years would elapse before the time of the completion of the whole building.

MR. PLUNKET said, as he understood, the first block was to be completely finished and ready for use by the autumn of the present year, and that a sufficient amount of money had been taken for completing the furnishing of the building as well as for the building itself. He did not know whether the First Commissioner of Works could hold out some better prospect as to the completion of Block No. 2. He would venture to ask him when the second block would be finished?

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he did not think they ought to miss so important a point as that raised by the hon. Member for Peterborough without some explanation from the Government. A difference of 50 per cent. upon an Estimate was almost unheard of, and would not be tolerated by any private individual. There were two grounds in respect of which he saw reasons for the increase—wages were higher, and the additional storey might account for another portion of it. But the cost of material had not increased. In fact, it ought to be less, and he must say that with the two exceptions he could not see any ground for so large an increase. If it were a matter for their own private expenditure the architect would be seriously taken to task for such an outrageous increase over the Estimate. The difficulty as to the foundations was one which ought to have been discovered before by means of borings.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Is not the increase due to the fact that although this is supposed to be a brick building there is a vast amount of stone put into it?

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, there was no doubt that the building had cost a great deal more than was estimated; but he was not responsible for that. He merely carried on the contract which was entered into by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and he himself was anxious that the work should be completed within as short a time as possible. The delay which had taken place had its origin in the mode in which the work was carried out from the beginning—by the erection of the building in two blocks instead of as a whole. It was the late Government that determined that it should be erected in two blocks. The first block would be completed at the end of this year—that was to say, at the end of the two years that he anticipated when he spoke last year. The second block would then be commenced, and, judging from the progress made with the first block, the second block would be completed at the end of four years from the beginning, which would make 12 years in all from the commencement of the scheme. That was not altogether a satisfactory state of things, but, as he had said, it arose from the decision of the late Government to erect the build-

ing in two blocks instead of one and from the unforeseen difficulties with regard to the foundations. The building extended 35 feet more into the Park than was originally intended, and instead of adhering to the original design it was decided to transfer the Admiralty staff into the first block, and for that reason the character and size of the rooms had been altered. That was the best explanation he could give of the various causes of the increase.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he thought the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman opened up a matter of grave consideration. He had told them that the character of the rooms in the building had been completely altered. Those who remembered the discussion upon this building in 1887 knew what took place. The building was erected in accordance with the recommendation of a Committee which sat in that year. Great trouble was taken by the Committee upon the point of the construction of the rooms, and they thought it desirable that instead of everybody having a small room to himself the work should be done in larger rooms, so as to provide for greater economy and better supervision. Now it appeared, as the explanation of the increased cost of the works, that this careful decision of the House of Commons had been reversed by the Government, and that they had gone back to the old system of small rooms, which was condemned by the Committee. This was a question of principle, and far more important than that of cost, which, as a fact, had not been satisfactorily explained at all. The increase of 50 per cent. had not been accounted for, unless it was said that it was owing to the alteration of the rule laid down by the House of Commons—to resort to the old system of small rooms. That seemed to be the only excuse for this 50 per cent. increase—that the Government had upset the deliberate decision of Parliament. He had been in the Civil Service for many years, and he knew it was generally acknowledged that in the interests of the Public Service it was better that the officers should occupy large rooms. The House of Commons had given the Government no authority to act in this way, and they were entitled to know why the change had been made. The plans of the building were exhibited, and he

asked a question as to whether this arrangement was being carried out, and Mr. Smith and the Chairman of the Committee distinctly stated that the recommendations of the Committee had been adopted. He thought that the late First Commissioner ought to tell them upon what authority the Government changed the plans of the building as they were decided by the Committee.

MR. PLUNKET said, the time referred to by the right hon. Gentleman just now was the time when he was at the Office of Works. It was an entire misapprehension, which he did not think was intended, to assume that the recommendations of the Committee had been departed from in this matter. There would be in the building large rooms as recommended by the Committee, and it was quite a mistake to suppose that that principle had been abandoned. The only changes which had been made, and which would cause but a very slight difference in the number of large rooms available for the use of the clerks, were made upon the earnest representation of the Admiralty, with whom they were in communication at that time. His noble Friend who was then First Lord consulted his staff, and it was upon the urgent advice of the authorities at the Admiralty that the changes were made; but the number of large rooms available for the purposes of the clerks had not been substantially reduced at all. There certainly was no intention to depart from the recommendation of the Committee, and, so far as he knew, the recommendation had not been departed from. He believed that one or two rooms had been changed in allocation, but there was no change of small rooms for large rooms. He did not want in the least degree to shelter himself behind the Report of the Committee, but he did say that they tried to carry out the Report of the Committee as far as possible to the letter, and that any departures made as to the distribution of the rooms in the new building were made under the express advice of the authorities of the Admiralty. He was glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that they might hope that within a period of four years this building would be completed, and not only that, but he assumed that they would have the advantage of the way being opened up from the Park into Charing Cross, which

would undoubtedly be a great convenience and do much to facilitate traffic.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he had no doubt the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman was all right, except that he said the alterations were made by the Admiralty themselves.

MR. PLUNKET: I said upon the advice of the Admiralty.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, of course these were the very people who would want to alter the large rooms into small rooms. It was these officials against whom the Committee was fighting in order to get these large rooms for the better carrying on of the work of the public. He did not say that the Commissioner of Works was responsible, but this was a matter which was not to be looked over very lightly. The Government had said that the building would be erected for a certain sum, and then it turned out that there was an increase of £110,000, or 50 per cent. upon the Estimate. He had no doubt they would hereafter have other increases, perhaps to the extent of £40,000 or £50,000. All Governments ought to get proper estimates, and let the House know what was going to be the cost. He hoped the present Commissioner of Works would get this building completed as soon as possible.

MR. HANBURY said, it was difficult to arrive at the facts in this case. The reason given by the late Commissioner of Works for some portion of this increased expenditure was that the plans had been altered, and that there were a good many small, instead of large, rooms. No sooner was that statement made than up jumped the previous Commissioner of Works and said that there was not this number of small rooms in the building. It was important that they should know the facts in this matter. It was not only that the House had been deceived, but the Committee had been deceived also. The Committee went very thoroughly into the question, and witnesses were called who said that not only in the interests of economy, but of good management, the clerks should cease to sit in the small rooms, and it was arranged that there should be large rooms in the new building. He contended that they were throwing away all the benefits that

they had expected to get from the new Admiralty Buildings if the clerks were going to be placed in a series of small rooms. He agreed with the hon. Member for Peterborough that the Admiralty officials were the last people who should be consulted upon this matter. They had got into a groove with regard to a good many things, but to the best of his recollection there was not one witness who came before the Committee that did not impress upon them the desirability of enlarging these rooms. While one evil was being remedied another of a similar character was being perpetrated, and the result would be that the annual cost of the Admiralty Office would be as great in the future as it had been in the past. As there was a difference of opinion between the two ex-First Commissioners as to the course that had been taken, he should like to know what were the facts of the case. Was one right hon. Gentleman right when he said there was a system of large rooms in the Admiralty, or was the other right hon. Gentleman right when he said there were a series of small rooms?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I should be very sorry to be in conflict with my right hon. Friend, but what I understand is this. According to the plan of 1887 the principal officers were to be in the old building. The Admiralty Office, however, made a requisition that they should be allowed to remove their principal officers to the new building. Those officers do not want large rooms. The new building, as I understand, was to be laid out wholly in large rooms. The removal of the principal staff necessitates the provision of small rooms, which are of a more expensive character, for their accommodation. No doubt the old Admiralty will be remodelled in parts and larger rooms will then be provided. The principle of having large rooms for large bodies of clerks will, no doubt, be carried out.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he understood, then, the cause of the extra expense was that the new building, which was to have been made in large rooms, had been made in small rooms for the admirals, secretaries, and people of that kind, and, further, that another sum was going to be spent in making large rooms in the old Admiralty for the clerks. It was extraordinary that after Parliament had sanctioned the expenditure of

£195,000 the Government should, without authority, have altered the plans and thereby incurred additional expenditure, in order to provide certain officials, he supposed, with better rooms than they had at present. He said that no Government had any right to alter the building, at a large cost, without consulting Parliament. He moved the reduction of the Vote by £1,000, in order that Members might have an opportunity of considering the question, and of obtaining an undertaking that the original plans and the alterations would be exhibited in the tea-room. It was quite clear that the late Commissioner had had a great deal to do with the alterations.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That £30,200 be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he did not think the proposed reduction would be of any value. As a matter of fact, it was the ex-First Commissioner on the other side of the House (Mr. Plunket) who made the changes, and they had been actually carried out. He supposed that the only thing that could now be done was to sue the right hon. Gentleman and the late Government for spending the additional money.

MR. PLUNKET: As far as I am concerned, I have no objection whatever to the suggestion of my hon. Friend, that an opportunity should be given of showing exactly what alterations have been made. I venture to say that the result will be to show that the alterations are very small indeed. The idea that the system of large rooms has been sacrificed is an entire mistake, and the amount of money actually expended on the alterations forms a very small part of the increased expenditure. It will be found, I believe, to be something less than a tenth part of the whole additional expense.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: £12,000.

MR. PLUNKET: Yes; £12,000 was the whole expense which was incurred by these alterations, and the sacrifice of the principle of large rooms can hardly be said to exist at all. No doubt some of the rooms in the new building have been allocated in a different way from what was originally intended when the plans were made, but any changes

that were made during the time that I had any knowledge of the Office of Works were made at the instance and by the advice of the officers of the Admiralty. I have no reason to think that they sacrificed to their personal convenience the whole of the Service, and I believe that the more this matter is inquired into the more it will be found that there is really no substantial ground for the grave view that has been stated by some Members of the Committee. I do not in the least wish to shelter myself from responsibility. I shall be very glad if the matter is inquired into, as I consider that a totally different complexion will then be put upon it.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE: I shall be very glad to have the plans showing precisely the difference between the original plan and the alterations that have been made placed in the tea-room. As the money has been already spent on the building, I hope the hon. Gentleman will not press the reduction.

MR. BARTLEY said, it would quite satisfy him if the plans were produced.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would also issue a statement showing how the excess sum was made up?

MR. H. GLADSTONE: Yes, I will do that.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

5. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £59,278, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1895, for Expenditure in respect of Miscellaneous Legal Buildings—viz., County Courts, Metropolitan Police Courts, and Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland."

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, he saw that a large sum of money was included in the Vote for the Metropolitan Police Court Buildings. He had frequently protested against such expenditure out of Imperial funds on the plain and simple ground that outside London each town paid for its own police courts, whereas London did not. He believed he almost carried an Amendment on the subject at one time, and he had certainly thought that some alteration should have been made.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am not surprised at my hon. Friend bringing this subject forward again. He brought it forward last Session, and in the discussion that took place upon it my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) promised to take steps to transfer these courts to some Local Authority. Within a very short period after the discussion in this House we communicated with the London County Council, and proposed that they should take over the police courts. The matter is a very complicated one, and we have been in communication with them ever since. We have had three or four interviews with representatives of the County Council, and only about a fortnight ago we had our last interview. We are still in treaty with the County Council for the purpose of getting them to take the courts over. They do not refuse to take them over, but they, of course, would like to have a *quid pro quo*. It is very natural that when they are asked to take over an expenditure of this kind they should desire to have something in return. I was hopeful that before the Vote came on this Session the buildings would be transferred. I am sorry to say that that has not yet been done. I think there is every prospect of making an arrangement, and if my hon. Friend will only give us a little more time I hope to be able to succeed in carrying out the object he has in view. I entirely sympathise with that view myself, and have always done so since I have been in the House.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY: The announcement which has just been made by the right hon. Gentleman is a very serious one. Not only is the matter very complicated, but it will require legislation to effect this transfer. Those who have listened to previous discussions on this subject will remember that it has always been mentioned and never disputed that if you are to effect this transfer of charge from the Imperial Exchequer to the London County Council, or in some other form to the shoulders of the London ratepayers, there will inevitably be put forward claims for a set-off in respect of burdens which the London ratepayer at present pays, and which it is arguable that ratepayers in similar communities in other parts of the country do not have to bear—in other words, you will have in some

MERCHANDISE MARKS (FILES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Bill to amend the Merchandise Marks Acts, 1887 and 1891, in respect of the marking of Files, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Coleridge, Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, and Colonel Howard Vincent.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 126.]

HOP SUBSTITUTES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Brookfield, Bill to regulate and restrict the use of Hop Substitutes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Brookfield, Mr. Channing, Sir Edmund Lechmere, Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Mr. Rankin, Colonel Warde, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, and Mr. Godson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 127.]

NAVY (VICTUALLING YARD MANUFACTURING ACCOUNTS, 1892-3).

Annual Accounts presented,—of the Cost of Manufacturing, Provisions, Victualling Stores, &c., at the Home Victualling Yards for 1892-3, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANKS).

Copy presented,—of Balance Sheet setting forth the Assets and Liabilities of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, in respect of Trustee Savings Banks on 20th November, 1893 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 14th March, 1894, declaring that Henry Highman, Inspector of Telegraph Messengers, Post Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCES AND ANNUITIES.

Accounts presented,—of moneys received and disposed of, and of contracts made, for the grant of Deferred Life Annuities, and for Payments on death, during 1893 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (PENSIONS OF SOLDIERS.)

Copy presented,—of Further Regulations relative to the Pensions of Soldiers [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES.)

Copies presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, Nos. 1331 (Greece), 1332 (France), and 1333 (Portugal) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS SERIES).

Copy presented,—of Reports on Subjects of General and Commercial Interest, No. 326 (United States) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES.)

Copy presented,—of Statement showing the Expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in England and Wales in the year 1893 upon Annual Grants to Elementary Schools, also the number of Elementary Schools on 31st August, 1893, &c. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (EVENING SCHOOLS) CODE, 1894.

Copy presented,—of Code of Regulations for Evening Continuation Schools, with Explanatory Memorandum, Schedule, and Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869, AND AMENDING ACTS, AND WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION ACT, 1889.

Copy presented,—of Scheme for the Management of the Funds applicable to the Intermediate and Technical Education of the inhabitants of the county of Flint in the matter of Samuel Smith's Gift, of the Hawarden Free Grammar School, &c., of the Holywell Grammar School, and of the St. Asaph Grammar School, &c. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 44.]

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869, AND AMENDING ACTS, AND WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION ACT, 1889.

Copy presented,—of Scheme for the Management of the Funds applicable to the Intermediate and Technical Education of the inhabitants of the county of Anglesey in the matter of the Free Grammar School and Almshouse founded by David Hughes in the parish of Beaumaris [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 45.]

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 30th March 1894.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to the continuance of his indisposition:—

Whereupon Mr. Mellor, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

RECORDS OF PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS.

MR. E. SPENCER (West Bromwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the custom in many Police Courts for the Magistrates, prior to hearing charges, to be furnished with information of the previous convictions (if any) of the parties charged; and, if so, will he issue instructions that such information shall not in future be furnished until after the Magistrates have decided to convict?

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Before that question is answered I should like to ask whether it is not also true that previous convictions are put before Chairmen of Quarter Sessions and Judges of Assize before they sum up to the jury, and whether at certain Petty Sessions the procedure by which previous convictions of prisoners is proved is often very lax indeed?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): In reply to the question of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, I have to say that I have no reason to think that it is customary for Magistrates, prior to hearing cases, to be furnished with information of previous convictions (if any) of the parties charged. Such a practice is, in my opinion, to be strongly deprecated, and in the Metropolitan Police Courts it is not allowed. In answer to the hon. Member for Preston, I may say I believe that what the hon. Member states is the case, in some

parts of the country at any rate. In my opinion, that information ought not to be supplied until the time of passing sentence. I think it might possibly prejudice the case of the prisoner even in the mind of a perfectly fair and impartial Judge that he should know what the prisoner's previous criminal record was. As far as my influence is concerned, it will be in the direction for the discontinuance of the practice. I agree that the present system of identifying prisoners is very unsatisfactory. I recently appointed a Departmental Committee to consider this matter. The Committee have presented their Report, and I hope to be able to give effect to its recommendations, under which I trust the possibility of mistake, if not altogether prevented, will be largely diminished.

THE CHARITY COMMISSION.

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Parliamentary Charity Commissioner whether it is intended to add to or alter the composition of the Charity Commission in order to enable that body to carry out the new duties imposed upon them by the recent Local Government Act, and to obtain Returns of charity accounts from the numerous charities in which such Returns are now in arrears; and, whether it is intended by that body in carrying out such new duties to apply at once or gradually the Resolution of this House of 18th May, 1886, that every scheme ought to provide for the majority of the trustees or managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the charity extends?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) (who replied) said: (1) The question of making proper provision to enable the Charity Commissioners to discharge, consistently with the due execution of their other duties, the particular duties mentioned in the question, will be raised at the proper time; meanwhile, the Commissioners have no information upon this point. (2) It has been stated in the Report of the Charity Commissioners for 1892 that for many years past they have introduced into their schemes the principle of the representative appointment of trustees, and that the representative element has not infrequently been placed in a majority by those

schemes. The Commissioners do not propose to recede from the practice thus stated in the administration of the Local Government Act of last Session.

MR. DODD : May I ask what, in the opinion of the Commission, is the proper time at which these questions should be raised ?

MR. ACLAND : I suppose some time between now and November.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Camberland, Penrith) : Is it a fact that subsequent to the Resolution being passed by this House in May, 1886, a Select Committee reported they had satisfied themselves that the Resolution could not be practically carried into effect ?

MR. ACLAND : I think it very likely they said that in reference to certain cases. The hon. Gentleman must understand I am only acting temporarily on behalf of the Charity Commission, and I can only give him the information they have forwarded to me.

THE ESSEX FISHING GROUNDS.

MR. DODD : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the soil of the public fishing ground in Essex, where the recent collision took place between fishermen of Tollesbury and fishermen from Burnham, is vested in the Crown or in whom it is vested ; and, if it is vested in the Crown, whether he will advise the putting in force of the Crown rights in order to preserve the soil of the public fishing ground from being removed by the Burnham men to their private oyster grounds to the destruction of the oyster culture on such public fishing grounds, or what steps he will take to prevent the public fishing ground being destroyed ?

MR. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich) : At the same time I may ask the right hon. Gentleman what course either he or the Fishery Department propose to adopt in order to preserve the public fishing ground of the Colne and Blackwater from further depredations in respect to removal of cultch ?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : The soil of the fishing ground where the recent collision took place between fishermen of Tollesbury and fishermen of Burnham is *primâ facie* vested in the Crown, and cannot, therefore, be claimed by one set of fishermen

more than another ; but I am advised that it is a question of great legal nicety whether the cultch which lies on that soil is the property of the Crown or not. The best way of protecting these fisheries would appear to be to enlarge the powers of the Sea Fisheries Committees to make bye-laws, and this will require legislation. I will consider how far this is practicable.

DANGEROUS DERELICT.

MR. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that, on the night of 28th February last, the rudder of the *S.S. Larne* was smashed by a floating derelict in latitude 47° 27' N., and in longitude 12° 2' W., the bearing of the Lizard at the time being N. 60° 49' E., 310 miles ; and will the Government cause inquiry to be made into the matter, and immediately concert such measures as will avert a similar catastrophe happening to our passenger and Mercantile Marine service in our trade routes between here and America ?

*MR. MUNDELLA : From the deposition regarding this casualty, which was taken on the 5th instant at the Custom House at Falmouth, and is on record at the Board of Trade, it appears that while the *S.S. Larne* was running under steam and sails before a fresh south-westerly gale accompanied by a very heavy cross sea, her rudder broke across horizontally at the water line. The casualty was attributed by the master as being "probably due to striking a floating spar." I am advised that with equal reason it may be attributable to the rough state of the weather. To search for every floating spar in the North Atlantic and elsewhere, and take it out of the water, would be a serious undertaking, but on a later question I will explain what the Government propose to do in the matter.

PRISON WARDERS' HOURS.

MR. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can hold out any hope of being able to introduce such reforms into the administration of the prisons as will shorten the long hours of the prison warders, and such alterations as will tend to make promotion more equal and rapid throughout the whole Service.

Mr. Acland

MR. ASQUITH : The whole question of the long hours of prison warders was gone into in 1891 by a Departmental Committee, of which the hon. Gentleman was a Member, and which suggested many improvements in the conditions of service, since carried into effect. The whole subject is engaging my attention, but I am not at present in a position to say more.

ILLUSTRATED LESSONS ON INTEMPERANCE.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is prepared to recommend, as part of the curriculum of our elementary schools, such instruction, either by coloured drawings or otherwise, as will show the evil consequences on the body and mind of drinking intoxicating liquors?

MR. ACLAND : The Code and Revised Instructions to Inspectors already make provision by which lessons on the subject of temperance can be given, and there is a slight addition to the New Code on this matter. The provision of drawings and the like, which may be valuable as illustrations, rests with managers and Boards, and not with the Department.

WORKING HOURS AT THE CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether telegraph clerks are employed on special wires in London from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m., whereas two clerks are employed in the country districts to perform special wire duties ; whether clerks in the Central Telegraph Office, after having performed a week's duty of six days of 10 hours' duration, are called upon to work 12 hours' additional duty on the Sunday ; and whether, having regard to the exhaustive character of the work, he will follow the example set by the Government with reference to *employés*, and grant an eight hours day for telegraph clerks?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : (1.) It is the fact telegraphists are employed on special wires in the offices of provincial newspapers in London from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., whereas at provincial

offices the duties are divided. Formerly the same arrangement obtained in the provinces as in London, and it is only from a desire to meet, as far as possible, the wishes of the Press and the convenience of the staff that the duty is not yet divided in London. (2.) In order to avoid calling upon the telegraphists to give two attendances in the day, the duties are so distributed as to give a working day of 10 hours and a working day of six hours, instead of two working days of eight hours each ; and for the convenience of the staff themselves these long and short attendances are taken on alternate weeks. I find that in two or three cases telegraphists, after working a long attendance during the week, have given a further attendance on Sunday of 12 hours. And I have given instructions that this shall not be permitted in future.

CUSTOMS STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT.

MR. GROVE (West Ham, N.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the annual allowances of money, granted in addition to salary for special work, to abstractors and clerks in the Customs Statistical Department, and to second officers at certain of the Customs outposts, are in accordance with the terms of the Orders in Council, which abolished duty pay ; and, if not, whether such allowances can properly be granted in other Departments of the Service?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : There is no analogy between the allowances referred to (which are of the nature of allowances for acting in a superintending capacity) and the duty pay forbidden in the cases of certain classes of Civil servants by the Orders in Council. There is no ground for extending the system of allowances in other branches of the Department or in other Departments.

HAULBOWLINE DOCKYARD.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Government intend to complete the equipments necessary to Haulbowline, so as to enable all kinds of repairs to be finished in the dockyard as originally intended ; whether any portion of the enormous naval expenditure will be expended in Ireland ; whether

H.M.S. *Warspite* is to be towed across to Devonport for repairs; and whether, having regard to the want of employment at Haulbowline and Passage, the Admiralty will give a fractional share of the work to those places?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): (1.) While there is no intention of fully equipping a sixth dockyard, the Haulbowline Yard plant is being rendered more and more capable of repairing ships in case of emergency. (2.) Yes; both at Belfast and Haulbowline there will be expenditure during the year 1894-5. The coastguard vessels on the Irish coast are repaired at Haulbowline, as well as the *Warspite*, so far as her repairs can be conveniently arranged for. (3.) When the *Warspite* proceeds to Devonport it will be under her own steam. (4.) The Admiralty have done, and will do, their best to allot to Haulbowline Yard and to contractors in the neighbourhood of Cork any work that can be done there with due regard to convenience and economy.

THE DESTRUCTION OF DERELICTS.

MR. MACDONA: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that a deputation waited upon the Prime Minister on the 16th instant to lay before him a Petition signed by about 900 masters of vessels, representing about 31,000 seamen, praying the Government to take immediate action in concert with the United States Government for the destruction of floating derelicts, now so numerous and so dangerous to the lives of passengers and seamen crossing the Atlantic; whether the present Prime Minister is as willing to act in concert with the American Government as the late Prime Minister stated himself to be in January last; and what steps do the Government propose to take to bring about so desirable an undertaking?

MR. MUNDELLA: My right hon. Friend has requested me to answer this question. The Prime Minister has forwarded to me for consideration the Memorial referred to by the hon. Member. It bears the signatures of 891 persons stated to be masters of British ships. Conferences have already taken place between the Admiralty and the Board of Trade on this question, and, in

concert with the First Lord, it is arranged to appoint a Departmental Committee, on which the Admiralty and the Board of Trade are to be represented, to consider and report on the Memorials which have been received, and the correspondence which has taken place on the subject of floating derelicts.

CLUBS AND EXCISE LICENCES.

MR. DODD: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether clubs at which alcoholic liquors are sold to members are exempt from the necessity of taking out licences in cases where the profits of such sales go to the individual proprietors of such clubs, or in cases where the club is under contract to take such liquors from individual vendors or brewers so as to be in effect a tied house; if such clubs are exempt, whether he is aware that such clubs compete seriously in many places with inns paying heavy Licence Duties; and whether he proposes to make any alteration in the matter?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): There is not any exemption in favour of clubs from the Licence Duty payable in respect of the sale of intoxicating liquors under the conditions mentioned in the question. In any case, therefore, of a proprietary club at which the liquors supplied are the property of the proprietor and are sold by him to the members penalties are incurred, under the Licensing Acts and the Excise Acts, unless the proprietor is the holder of a licence authorising the sale; and where evidence of sale has been forthcoming there have been successful prosecutions in such cases.

THE DISARMAMENT QUESTION.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, looking to the reported expressions of the King of Denmark to the effect that he knows that Russia, Austria, and probably Italy, are willing to enter into negotiations with other nations for a general reduction of armaments, the Government are now prepared to take steps with the object of bringing about a conference on the subject?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Of course, I cannot answer for reported statements of the King of Denmark. I will only repeat what I said the other night, that the

Government will take every opportunity which appears to them to be favourable to promote the object indicated in the question. It is not possible at present to make any further statement on the subject.

INCOME TAX RETURNS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will issue a Return, in continuation of No. 228 of Session 1890, on Income Tax Assessments, made up to 5th April, 1893?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Return for which the hon. Member asks can be given in about six weeks. If he wishes it, a Return made up to April, 1892, could be presented more quickly; but probably he would be willing to wait for the more complete Return.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON COMMISSION.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to give notice that, in consequence of the answer given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday, that it is not intended this Session to propose legislation in pursuance of the Report of the University of London Commission, that I will on Friday, April 20, draw attention to the Report, and move a Resolution.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

CHARITY COMMISSION (PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

*MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) said, he had to move, as an Amendment,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is desirable to take measures to bring the action of the Charity Commission more directly under the control of Parliament, and to give it more effectual means of dealing with the business which will come before it."

The Charity Commission, the hon. Gentleman pointed out, consisted of two parts—one constituted 41 years ago for dealing with charitable trusts, and the

other constituted 25 years ago for dealing with endowed schools. The major department, as he might term it, for dealing with charitable trusts had its origin in a very long continued and exhaustive inquiry by a Royal Commission, which sat from the years 1818 to 1837. Then in 1835 a Select Committee was appointed by the House of Commons, it being composed of its most experienced Members, and including Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell. That Committee drew up a very interesting and valuable Report, which formed the basis of a Bill that was not passed till 1853. By that Act the Commission was constituted for dealing with charitable trusts. The Act was amended in 1855 and amplified in 1860. The Act of 1853 fell far short of the recommendations of the powerful Select Committee of 1835. It, however, gave considerable powers of investigation; it enabled the Commissioners to apply to the Court of Chancery for orders with respect to charities; and in case these proceedings were insufficient, it empowered the Commissioners to introduce new schemes into Parliament, which schemes had to go through all the stages of Bills. Application to the Court of Chancery was found to be a cumbrous and costly proceeding; and the passing of schemes through Parliament fell through and became abortive. A Select Committee of the House in 1884 again examined into the matter, and in their Report drew special attention to the fact that the Charity Commission was not represented in Parliament, that there was no Minister responsible for its schemes, and that no Members were interested in conducting them through the various stages. This was the reason why the system became abortive. By the Amending Acts of 1855 and 1860 some defects were remedied; but the remedies applied by the Act of 1855 did not nearly approach the recommendations of the great Committee of 1835. An Amendment introduced into the Act of 1860 had a more vital effect, by exempting charities of a greater annual value than £50 from the prescribed procedure, and by that Amendment the Act was shorn of much vitality and force. The Charitable Trusts Department was thus founded upon three Acts of Parliament, the latest of which was passed 33 years ago; and that fact

alone was sufficient to show that occasion must have arisen for some change in the matter of procedure. He had been very much struck by the magnitude of the interests affected. It was difficult to get at accurate figures, but a voluminous and careful Digest, which occupied many years in preparation, was laid before Parliament in 1876. It showed that the cases known to the Charity Commission at that time numbered 36,000, that the trustees connected with them held 524,000 acres of land, and that the income administered amounted to £2,200,000. Since that time a great many additional trusts had been discovered. Of the total number of trusts no fewer than 4,805, with an annual income of £227,000, had been founded since 1837. He now had to deal with the Endowed Schools Department of the Commission which was created in 1869 by an Act of Parliament. It was admittedly more or less of an experiment, and the duration of the Act was limited to four years. In 1873 there was another Committee, into whose inquiry more or less acute political and even religious controversy entered. The result was that in 1874 an Act was passed which put an end to the Endowed Schools Commission as constituted, and transferred all its powers and duties to the Charity Commission, to which two members were added. The Act expired in 1879, and he believed he was correct in stating that since that time the Commission had been kept alive by the Expiring Laws Continuance Act. Such briefly, and without minute details, were the origin and objects and powers of the Charity Commission. As to its constitution, it was sufficient to point out that there was a Chief Commissioner, with second and third Commissioners on the charitable trusts side, and 10 Assistant Commissioners (five of whom appeared on the Estimates, however, as temporary Assistant Commissioners); and on the endowed schools side there were two Commissioners and seven Assistant Commissioners. Thus the whole staff of the Commission consisted of one Chief Commissioner, four Commissioners, a Secretary, and 17 Assistant Commissioners. He left out of sight the position of Parliamentary Commissioner, which had been filled by the hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench

(Mr. J. W. Lowther), and also by the hon. Member for Merionethshire (Mr. T. Ellis), but at the present moment it was not filled by anyone. The expenditure of the Commission was £15,000 in 1854; £27,565 in 1874; and the Estimate this year was £40,380. He thought he would carry with him the assent of the House when he said it was eminently desirable that there should be occasional investigation into the working of these extra-Parliamentary bodies; and even the Commissioners would assent to this, because their Reports were strewn with suggestions as to the modifications of their powers, which could hardly be carried out in legislation without being first embodied in the Report of a Select Committee. There were ample precedents for this Motion. In 1873 they had an inquiry by a Committee into the operation of the Endowed Schools Act; they had similar inquiries in 1884 and 1885 into the working of the Charitable Trusts Department, and again in 1886 and 1887 into the endowed schools work. Some very valuable recommendations were made by these Committees. Eight or ten years having gone by he thought his proposal one which would commend itself to the House. And he believed it would be felt by many Members that this was a particularly opportune moment for his Motion. The Local Government Act of last Session, which would ever be associated with the name of the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for India, who displayed so much tact and statesmanship in conducting it through the House, cast new and onerous duties on the Charity Commissioners. His Motion was divided into two parts. But the first and, he was free to confess, the vital part—that portion relating to the new duties he had just touched upon—was as to whether it was desirable to take measures to bring the action of the Charity Commissioners more directly under the control of Parliament. He thought it would be agreed that the present position of things was inconvenient. The Government were not responsible for the Charity Commissioners. They had a Parliamentary Charity Commissioner who sat at the Board, and was therefore a connecting link, but he had no controlling or dominant voice in the work of the Commission, and really Parliament had no

control over the Commissioners themselves. They might one day have the *reductio ad absurdum* of the system in seeing the Government compelled to support the grant of money in the Estimates for a policy of which they did not approve. The Committee of 1884 suggested the appointment of a Sessional Committee to deal with schemes just as the Commons Committee now dealt with enclosure proposals. The recommendations of the Committee of 1886-7 were to the effect that the responsibility of the Commission to Parliament should be clearly defined and made complete. It was in the hope that that might be the outcome of the proposed Committee that he brought forward this Motion. Finally, a word as to the spirit in which he made his proposal. He indulged in no carping criticism as to the labours of the Charity Commission. They had in the Commission a great engine for good. They had there men of high character and great ability, who were doing their duty to the State. To the Chief Commissioner and the indefatigable Secretary he was much indebted for their unvarying courtesy. But no human institution was perfect; and he had no doubt the Commission in its working might be improved by a healthy examination by a carefully constituted Select Committee. When one went into the rooms of the Commission at Whitehall he found them rather stuffy: they smelt rather of the schools; but if the windows were thrown open a little wider, and the healthy breezes of public opinion admitted, they would get more business-like common sense in its proceedings. It was in no spirit of hostility or carping criticism that he brought forward his Motion, but he earnestly and respectfully commended his Motion with the belief that its acceptance might strengthen and develop the powers for good of the Charity Commission.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, he proposed to follow the example of the hon. Member for Rushcliffe in casting no aspersions on the conduct or policy of the Charity Commission, and he did not think it would be necessary for him to detain the House at any great length. The Motion was one which he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer might accept without demur. He might remind the House that when a Select Committee was appointed some

years ago the whole question of the charities was in a state of chaos. There had been a very long investigation, and many important facts had been brought to light, but there had been no well-defined policy; indeed, he ventured to say there was still no such policy in regard to the poorer charitable institutions. But since then circumstances had vastly changed. The changes which had been continually taking place and the circumstances of the people rendered it necessary to deal with the charities which had been left, and which might be given in the future, in a somewhat broader spirit than had been exhibited hitherto. Indeed, Parliament had found it necessary to apply many charitable bequests to purposes differing from those for which they were originally left; although, of course, the purposes were kept as nearly analogous as possible. He believed that the Commissioners themselves felt that they required larger powers and greater freedom in dealing with these charities, for at present they were constantly bound and hampered by existing provisions which were really out of date. It was with a view of enlarging and defining their powers that this investigation was now asked for. He hoped that hon. Members would agree with him that the proper time for making that investigation had come, and for having a Parliamentary Commissioner in the House in order to give Members a better means of dealing with the subject. At present the position was peculiar, as the Government had to defend acts and expenditure for which they were not responsible. They ought to have in the House a Representative able to answer all questions and to indicate the policy of the Commission. The position of the Commissioner would not be actually on a par with those of the other Charity Commissioners. He hoped that such an appointment would be made, for it seemed to him that if such a Commissioner were appointed he would have a very practical position in the House, and would be found of great service and assistance in dealing with the various questions as they came up. The Act of last Session proposed that there should be some Representative of the Charity Commissioners appointed with a seat in that House. He trusted that this part of the subject needed no further arguments on his part to induce hon. Members to

assent to a Select Committee being shortly appointed. As to the second part of the Motion—namely, the desirability of bringing the action of the Charity Commissioners more directly under the control of Parliament—such a course was unquestionably now necessary in consequence of the growing need of the country. What was essential was that they should have the charities honestly, faithfully, and well administered, with due regard to the intentions of the testator, and ensuring that the class intended by him to be benefited should reap the benefit. He could not suggest a better way of securing that than by having a careful investigation made in the first instance of those charities which seemed specially to require to be under the direct control of Parliament. He was sure that if a Committee were appointed they would deal with the question faithfully and well. At present he did not think it could be said that many of the charities were properly and satisfactorily administered, or that they were administered with a due regard to the provisions under which they were specially bequeathed. He did not think that a lengthy investigation by the Committee would be necessary, looking at the facts that they would have before them; but he did think that if a Select Committee were appointed, it could do much to further the object in view, and if it were not too hampered by the terms of Reference the result of their investigations would be of the greatest value, and some useful legislation would be the result.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"A Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is desirable to take measures to bring the action of the Charity Commission more directly under the control of Parliament, and to give it more effectual means of dealing with the business which will come before it."

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) said, nobody would complain of the length of time occupied by the Mover and Secunder of the Resolution; on the contrary, any criticism made would be on the ground that their speeches had treated the matter too

superficially, and had glossed over altogether the really important points where difficulties might be expected. The hon. Member for Rushcliffe gave a very rapid historical survey of the causes which had led to the appointment of the Charity Commission, but he made no suggestions for improving the present method of administration; he did not deal with the causes which were said to necessitate the present steps being taken, nor did he make a suggestion as to the way in which the Charity Commissioners were to be in fact brought under the more direct control of Parliament in the future. He was very anxious to be informed on these two points; but, to his regret, as soon as the hon. Member got to the *crux* of the question, he looked at it steadily in the face and then quickly passed on to some other unimportant detail. A good deal of the speech of the hon. Member was taken up in considering the question of how far the Commission could be brought more directly under the control of Parliament. That was a separate question.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: The words of my Motion are—

"To give it more effectual means of dealing with the business which will come before it."

MR. J. W. LOWTHER said, he would deal with that presently. But the main point before the House was the proposal that the Charity Commissioners should be represented by a Minister in the House—a Minister to be called, he supposed, the Charities Minister, or the Minister of the Interior. He thought the House might have fairly looked to the hon. Member himself for some light and leading in the matter. He had performed a prominent and useful part on one of the Committees in connection with the matter, but he had now given them no indication of his views. The House might fairly ask why a Select Committee was now thought to be necessary at all. They had a great mass of evidence on the subject of charities already to hand, and no new subject for inquiry had been mentioned. Those who wanted information had only to turn to the Blue Books for the past few years, and to the Annual Reports of the Commissioners themselves. The question had also often engaged the attention of the House, and several Bills had been introduced, some of which had passed the Second Reading, and therefore

most hon. Members were familiar with the subject. He ventured to suggest that there was ample material to work upon already to hand, and that the appointment of a Select Committee was unnecessary. If the charities were so badly managed now by the Charity Commissioners at Whitehall, he failed to see how the fact that they were to have a Ministerial Representative in the House would in any way secure the better administration of the charity trusts. His hon. Friend had pointed out numerous cases in which Special Committees had been instituted with reference to particular charities, but he seemed to have forgotten altogether the fact that nearly the whole of one Session in 1883 was given up by a Committee to the subject, as was also the Session in the following year.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: The hon. Gentleman is not quoting my words.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER said, he thought he was fairly quoting the argument of the hon. Member, which was that the numerous inquiries which had taken place formed a precedent for a further inquiry. He would go further, and state that a great part of the Session of 1883 was taken up by an inquiry into the working of the Endowed Schools Act, in the course of which the action of the Charity Commission was thoroughly inquired into. The whole of the Session of 1884 was taken up by a Select Committee which was appointed to inquire into the working of the Charitable Trusts Act as worked by the Charity Commission. The whole of 1886 was taken up by the Select Committee that inquired into the working of the Endowed Schools Act as administered by the Charity Commission, and a considerable portion of the Session of 1887 was similarly taken up, and then, after the lapse of only seven years, the hon. Member came and said now was the time to have a thorough and a searching inquiry into the whole working of the Charity Commission. It seemed to him that they did not let the plant live, because they were always pulling it up to see how it was getting on. He regarded it as a most unnecessary proceeding to inquire into the whole working of the Charity Commission, because, as the hon. Member pointed out, the latter part of his Instruction to the Committee would raise the whole of that question. The

hon. Member must know, from having served on the Commission, what very delicate subjects were touched upon, and what considerable friction frequently arose; and when friction arose, it meant a great expenditure of time in investigating and getting to the bottom of the matter, so that it was not very likely a Committee with such a wide Instruction as this would be able to conclude their investigations this Session, beginning at so late a period as it would be before this Committee was appointed. But, in addition to that, the hon. Member also informed them that the very point which he was now anxious to refer to a Select Committee had so recently been inquired into as last Autumn. The hon. Member informed the House that a Departmental Inquiry had been ordered and held by the Treasury, and he did not think he was committing any breach of confidence when he said that amongst others, he (Mr. Lowther) himself was summoned by Sir Robert Hamilton, the Chairman of that Committee, to give evidence before them, and he detailed his evidence before that Committee. The Report of such Committee, he presumed, was now in the hands of somebody, probably the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had not received a copy of the Report, and, so far as he knew, it had never been made public; but the Report was in the office, and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Vice President of the Council would lay that Report upon the Table of the House, at all events the House would be in a better position to judge how far this very question, which the hon. Member now desired to go into, had been considered, and what were the views of Sir Robert Hamilton and the other very capable gentlemen who acted with him on that Committee in this particular. So much for past investigations. But the hon. Member said that the present was a very suitable time to inquire into the whole working of the Charity Commission; that the Local Government Act would come into force in November, and that it was desirable, if it was to do any good, that the new Minister for Charities and the whole paraphernalia which was to be set up, should be established and in working order before that Act was in force. Was that a reasonable proposal to make? Was it possible, with all the work the House had before it, and so short

a time in which to transact it, that so thorny and difficult a subject could be adequately dealt with before that period? The hon. Member said it was a good time to inquire into the working of the Charity Commission. Of course, if they were making such inquiry it would necessitate the constant attendance of at least two of the Commissioners and probably of the Secretary. Already the work of the Charity Commission was considerably increasing in consequence of the Parish Councils Bill being about to come into force. Already applications were arriving at the Commission daily, and almost hourly, asking for advice, assistance, and instruction as to how far the Parish Councils Act, when it began to operate in November, would affect the particular charities in each locality. The work of the Commission, therefore, was already beginning in this very particular, and it seemed hardly a suitable time to take away two Commissioners and the Secretary twice a week for the whole of the Session in order that they might attend regularly upstairs instead of allowing them to carry out their duties in their office in Whitehall. He thought both the Mover and the Seconder of this Motion fell into one great error in the general view they took of the work of the Charity Commission. That great error was that they seemed entirely to have overlooked the fact that the great bulk of the work of the Charity Commission was construing Acts of Parliament. The Charity Commission, when they were established, were established almost as a branch of the Court of Equity. They had to administer the law. They could not, in the great bulk of the work that they dealt with, give scope to any private opinion which they might have, or to any great views of policy which they might desire to introduce into the administration of the charities. They had to administer the law as they found it, and not as they would wish it to be. They were, just as much as the Court of Chancery itself, bound by former decisions of the Court; they were tied up very narrowly by the Acts of Parliament of 1853, 1855, and 1860, and other Acts; they could not go outside the corners of those Acts, and he could not think that a Minister would be in a position, unless he were a legal gentleman, to administer these Acts

of Parliament and to construe them, which was at present the ordinary everyday duty of the Charity Commission. If the hon. Member would look at the words of the Act which constituted the Commission, he would find that out of the three Commissioners two were obliged to be barristers of 12 years' standing. Why was that provision introduced, and a standing so very high as 12 years, which was an unusually long term, insisted upon? The reason was because it was intended that the Commission should relieve the Court of Chancery of a great part of the work which they did, and, therefore, it was necessary that the Acts should be administered by gentlemen of legal training who were capable of construing the difficult Acts with which they had to deal. During the four or five years he was at the Charity Commission he was certainly very strongly impressed with the fact that practically it was so difficult to put one's own views and desires into the administration of these charities because of being tied up in certain directions by the law which the Commission had to administer. There was another inquiry on this matter—that of the Schools Inquiry Commission—who reported that the work of the Charity Commission was divided into five heads. The first of these was the protection of charities against frauds or adverse claims. Surely that was a matter with which the Charity Commission were fully as capable of dealing as a Minister sitting in this House. It was not a matter in which policy could enter at all, but was solely and simply a matter of the construction of legal rights. The second head was "the authorisation of leases, mortgages, and sales." The same remark applied here. The third head was "the appointment of trustees," and there he admitted that questions of policy might arise, and he was sorry to think that questions of Party policy might very likely enter into that. He thought it was very desirable that they should not enter, and that was why he should be strongly against a Minister having charge of this matter, and its being taken out of the hands of an independent body who were not swayed and did not alter from time to time, as the gentlemen who came and went from the Treasury Bench. The next head was the removal of

trustees or masters, and, lastly, the power of framing new schemes. There, again, the matter of policy did enter to some extent ; but in that very matter of framing new schemes the Charity Commission were not able to go one inch outside the doctrine of *Cy-près* as laid down by the Court of Appeal. In his opinion, it would cause great mischief to introduce a Minister to deal with these matters, which it would be far better to leave in the hands of an administration independent of the changing politics of the day. That was the original recommendation made by Lord Brougham's Commission ; made by the House of Commons Committee in 1835, and made by Lord Chichester's Commission in 1849. These three inquiries went fully into the matter, and recommended as the result of their investigations that this Commission should be an entirely independent body. Nothing had occurred since to alter the status of the Commission, and it would be a great mischief if Party politics were allowed to enter into the administration of these charities. As he said, during the course of the Debates on the Parish Councils Bill, the Charity Commission was not a very popular body. The Tory Party thought it too Radical, and the Radical Party thought it too Tory ; therefore, the probability was, that it did justice. Lord John Russell was strongly of that opinion, because he said in introducing the Bill to the House—

“ It would be better that the question of the general superintendence and administration of charities should be altogether separated from any political question and from the interests of any Party.”

There was one other matter. As he had said, the action of the Charity Commission was subject to appeal to the Court of Chancery. If any person was aggrieved by any decision arrived at in the construction of different Acts, that person had the right of appeal to the Court of Chancery. He should not envy the position of a Minister in that House if his decisions were appealed from to the Court of Chancery and he was overruled. If it happened once, it might pass ; but if it happened more than once, he thought the Minister would never hear the end of the mistake which the Court of Chancery would have held he had made. He remembered some years ago his hon.

and learned Friend the Member for Plymouth, who was Solicitor General, made some *obiter dicta* with regard to licences, and it was afterwards held that his view of the law was not correct. It was a great many years before his hon. and learned Friend heard the last of that from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the position of a Minister would be even worse if he, in the capacity of a Minister, gave a judgment which was subsequently overruled by the Court of Chancery. He had only this to add : If the Government thought it was a desirable and opportune moment to hold a full investigation into the affairs of the Charity Commission, and to inquire into this very matter upon which they themselves, through their agents, were at the present time informed, it did not rest in their (the Opposition) mouths to oppose them. He was speaking entirely in his individual capacity, and not in any way as representing his hon. Friends on that side of the House when he said that he could not conceive a more inopportune moment for the sake of the Charity Commission and for the sake of the House itself. It was admitted it was impossible to make any change before November, and any changes which would have to be introduced would have to be introduced by legislation. He fully admitted that the powers of the Charity Commission required alteration, but he was sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer would admit that to attempt seriously to deal with a Bill of that kind, which would largely increase the powers of the Charity Commission, would be adding to such an extent to the already heavy load he had to carry that it would really break his back. He should regard it as a very mischievous thing if they were to introduce anything in the nature of Ministerial control which would tend in any way to bring Party politics to bear in these matters. He would only say that during the four or five years he had the honour of a seat at the Board of the Charity Commission he found no difficulty and no friction arising. His position was simply this : that he was in the House to answer any questions that might be put during the course of the Session. When the Vote came on, although he was not responsible for the details of the Vote, he was responsible for, and ready to reply upon, any points

relating to the policy of the Commission. If any point had arisen upon which the judgment of the majority of the House was contrary to the policy of the Commission, then there was no doubt that a Vote would have been passed at the instigation of the Government stating their view as to the policy that ought to be followed, and there was no doubt that in such a case the Charity Commission would have at once followed the policy indicated. He hoped that no friction had arisen—although he was rather inclined to think such was the case from the way the matter was dealt with by the Mover of the Motion—between the hon. Member whom he saw opposite who had acted as the fourth Charity Commissioner in this House—

MR. J. E. ELLIS: No such inference must be drawn from anything I have said.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER was glad to hear it, because he was afraid, from the way in which the hon. Member put a hypothetical case, that friction had occurred. He believed that the fact of a Commissioner being present in the House, and being in touch with hon. Members both in the Chamber and also privately in the Lobbies and elsewhere, was a great advantage both to Members of the House and also to the Charity Commission itself, and he should be very loth to disturb an arrangement which had been so highly recommended by those who had considered the subject.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he was very glad to hear the Mover and Seconder of this Motion say that they had not in their mind any desire to pass any hostile reflection upon the Charity Commission, or upon the able men who administered the work of that Commission. He believed they had the entire confidence of the House and of the country, and he hoped that anything said of these gentlemen would be said entirely upon that footing. The hon. Member for Cumberland had spoken, in the able way he always spoke, on a matter with which he was very well acquainted; but he was sorry that the hon. Member, during the five years he was at the Charity Commission, thought he was a member of an unpopular body—being unpopular with the Tories for one reason and with the Radicals for

another. There was an intermediate body which was strongly represented at Birmingham, but no commendation of the Charity Commission had come from the right hon. Members for West Birmingham and Bordesley, so that the Commission was unfortunate in the respect that it had been criticised in many quarters. One reason for that was not the fault of the Commission or of the Commissioners, but the fault of the position which it occupied. The hon. Member had referred to Lord Brougham's Committee in 1835, and to its having represented in its constitution a Committee independent of Parliament. There was another Commission at that time still more important—namely, the Poor Law Commission—and that Commission was independent of Parliamentary control. One of the most acute and intelligent writers who had ever treated of the constitution of such bodies—the late Mr. Bagehot—said of the Poor Law Commission—

“The experiment of conducting the administration of a Public Department by an independent and unsheltered authority has often been tried, and has always failed. Parliament always talked at it until it made it impossible.”

That was the position of the Charity Commission. Parliament talked at it and criticised its action. The hon. Member said there had been Committee after Committee on this subject. Why had there been? They had had Committee after Committee because there was something with which Parliament was dissatisfied. In spite of the ability and character of the gentlemen who composed the Poor Law Commission, it was found impossible to sustain it. The same objection applied in a great degree to all independent authorities of this kind. Parliament became inquisitive; it became more or less a judge when they had bodies of that kind; and unless they could satisfy Parliament and the House of Commons that the matters were being administered in the way that was desired, they would always have Debates, Committees, and Inquiries of this character. The hon. Member for Cumberland had given a great many reasons why this Motion should not be acceded to. He understood the hon. Member himself said that he considered the Commission was too much tied up. That was the very reason why the Commission should

have Parliamentary representation. A Parliamentary Representative would state what should be done. There were, for instance, restrictions which ought to be removed, and provisions passed for protecting and freeing the hands of the Commission so as to enable them to do what they ought to be able to do. The hon. Member seemed to think that the legislation with regard to charities and the Charity Commission, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, could not be altered. That was not so, and the moment they brought the Commission into Parliament they would find what were the obstacles in the way of its legitimate and beneficial action, which could be best removed by legislation. The hon. Member also said that the Commission consisted of lawyers of 12 years' standing, and that led him to think that the Bills must have been drawn up by lawyers. In moving for this Committee there was no intention to declare in any manner the exact method in which the change proposed should be carried out—whether it should be in the relation in which the Local Government Board stood towards the Poor Law, or in the relation in which the Treasury stood to the Commissioners of Woods. Whatever might be the arrangement, he could not but think it would be to the advantage of the Commissioners themselves, as well as to the interests with which they were entrusted, that they should be brought more directly into relation with Parliament. With that portion of his hon. Friend's Motion, therefore, he was in accord. As to the second part of the Motion, it had been urged by the hon. Member for Penrith as an argument against the appointment of a Committee that the demands upon the Charity Commissioners at the present time were so heavy that a member of that body could not be spared to attend to give evidence. That was hardly to be regarded as an argument against the adoption of the Motion.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER said, his point was that it was not an opportune moment, just at the time when applications were pouring in from all sides, to compel the attendance of two Commissioners, and perhaps the Secretary, before a Select Committee.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, that no doubt the House of Lords had, in the Local Government Bill, thrown some

additional work on the Charity Commissioners, and this furnished an additional argument for giving them more effectual means to enable them to carry out their useful work. He should be extremely sorry to think that the Motion had anything of a Party character about it. But he did think that it would be well to give the Commissioners some more effectual means of discharging the onerous duties which they had hitherto so well discharged. Therefore, he heartily assented to the Motion.

SIR S. NORTHCOTE (Exeter) said, he did not know whether the Vice President of the Council would take part in the discussion; but if the right hon. Gentleman did so, he hoped he would take the opportunity of informing the House whether the Government had come to any decision with regard to the Departmental Report which had been alluded to by some of the preceding speakers. He thought it was a pity that they were not put in possession of the views of the Government on this Report, and also made in some degree acquainted with its contents. With regard to the general question, he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer was fairly to be congratulated on the lightness of heart with which he had accepted a proposal to add to the already formidable body of his colleagues in the Government. If the Charity Commission was strengthened in the manner the right hon. Gentleman had indicated, the Department would undoubtedly benefit by having a high official to fight their battles in Parliament; but he was not convinced that there would be any corresponding advantage to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He agreed that it would be well to give the Charity Commissioners more effectual means than they at present possessed to discharge their duties. He referred particularly to a point that had not been touched upon—namely, the very inadequate means the Commissioners had of securing the proper audit of the charity accounts, and he hoped the Treasury would afford them increased facilities in this direction. The remarks of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the hon. Member for Penrith must have convinced the Mover and Seconder of the Resolution that the question was one which could hardly be disposed of so

speedily as they seemed to think possible, and that such changes as they appeared to indicate would involve long and anxious consideration in that House. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green had spoken of securing greater local control over the charities, but hon. Members who remembered the discussion on this point in connection with the Local Government Bill would probably feel that any proposal to further divert existing charities from the purposes for which they were intended would meet with strong opposition. He shared the opinion that the present was not an opportune moment for the appointment of a Select Committee, especially as the effect of the Reports presented by Committees during the past 10 years had been that, on the whole, the duties of the Charity Commissioners had been faithfully discharged. No complaints had been made of the manner in which the Commissioners had discharged their duties by the hon. Member who moved the Motion. He confessed, therefore, that the programme of the Government was sufficiently full to make it perhaps advisable that any step of the kind suggested should be postponed until some further acquaintance with the working of the Local Government Act was obtained. He feared there was a disposition to enter with too light a heart on the question of transferring the working of our charitable system from a non-political body to members of a political Party. He was persuaded that any such change would be disadvantageous to the administration of charity. The Commissioners, in their Report for 1893, stated that their action in applying to the relief of the sick and aged charities hitherto distributed in doles had encountered frequent opposition; but that, when once established, the system was most free from friction and discontent. He believed that there was considerable danger that if the Department were presided over by a gentleman with a seat in the House, it would find it less easy to resist the political pressure of certain constituencies, and the change would not be at all conducive to the fair and proper distribution of the charities.

*MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said, there was no want of inquiry into the subject of the Charity Commission, but there was a want of the

House in carrying out the results of the inquiries which had been held. A very good Commission sat in 1884 under the presidency of his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board, and the recommendations of that inquiry had not been carried out. For three years he, with a number of hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House, and with the general approval of the two Front Benches, had endeavoured to carry a Bill to put the recommendations of the Commission into operation. But as the Leader of the House had pointed out, every effort at making the Charity Commission more effective for its work had been stopped by the action of the right hon. Members for West Birmingham and Bordesley, whose most violent energies were always aroused against every effort to reform the Charity Commission. He had listened with great interest to the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham in introducing this Motion; but he thought his hon. Friend had rather misplaced the importance of the two parts of his speech. It was useless to alter the constitution of the Charity Commission unless they gave them power to carry out the work they had to do. The Commission had no power in the case of a charity over £50 a year without calling into action the power of the Attorney General and a very expensive Chancery suit that might almost swallow up the charity. The Charity Commission was utterly powerless in those very cases where its powers were most needed, and there had been an absolute waste of the charity funds of the country and an absolute loss of money, owing, he believed, to the delay in carrying out the very moderate and very sensible recommendations of the Committee of 1884. He thought there was no use in inquiring further into the matter unless the Government intended to carry into effect the recommendations of the Committee, and give to the Charity Commissioners the powers necessary to save those charity funds which were now wasted.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, that as he had had the honour of serving on the Committee of 1886 and 1887 perhaps the House would bear with him while he submitted a few cursory observations on the Motion. He could not

help learning from his experience on the Committee how severe was the injury done to the Charity Commission by the conduct of that inquiry. The Committee had had before them as witnesses members of the Commission, and some were constantly in the room; but it must be borne in mind that all the time was not occupied in the room, for the Committee had to make inquiries in the office of the Commission itself in consequence of complaints made and accusations brought before the Committee. He had reason to know that the service of the Commission had been greatly injured by that long inquiry; and if the House granted a new Committee fresh difficulties would be created for a body they all desired to strengthen. He wished to confirm what his hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon had said with regard to the recommendations of the Committees not having been carried into effect by the House. The Committee of 1887 had made several recommendations, none of which had been carried into execution. One was—and he doubted the wisdom of its policy—that every new scheme of the Charity Commission should be submitted to a Standing Committee. Another recommendation was that the Commission should be strengthened by the enlargement of the numbers of the Assistant Inspectors. That recommendation had, to a certain extent, been carried out—not by the Treasury, but by the County Councils. Power had recently been given to the County Councils to contribute to the expense of inquiries; Inspectors had been appointed to hold the inquiries, and the cost fell very largely on the County Councils. A further recommendation was that the official staff should be strengthened and increased, but that had not been carried into effect either. In fact, if there had been any shortcomings on the part of the Commission during the last few years, he believed they had arisen from the neglect of the Treasury to carry out the recommendations of the various Committees. He was all the freer to make that remark, as a Conservative Government had been in Office during many of those years, and, therefore, he was complaining of his own political friends. A desire had been expressed that there should be more complete control by Parliament over the

Commission. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Motion had quoted the recommendations of the Committee in 1887 in that respect, but he had entirely omitted to quote the Committee's concluding words. The Committee, after stating that the responsibility of the Commission to Parliament should be made more clearly defined, added—

“This may be more readily accomplished by appointing a Minister of Education.”

That was a clear and definite recommendation, but it had not been carried out. It referred, however, to the educational side only, and had no reference whatever to the Charity Trust side of the Commission. He believed there was a great danger, if they had a Minister in charge of charities, of bringing the political element into the administration of the Charities. In the case of the Local Government Act, which was passed last Session, with the agreement substantially of both political Parties, the only time when any heat arose was when the question of the charities came up for consideration; and he thought they should avail themselves of the lesson thus emphatically taught them. Another reason against such an appointment was that the work done by the Charity Commission was essentially judicial. The making of law was a good thing, and the administration of it was a good thing; but what he believed to be a bad thing was confusion between the administration of law and the making of law. They would have in the changes of Parties—the right and proper changes of Parties—in the House from time to time sudden changes of policy with regard to the charities, and those changes of policy must interfere in a manner highly dangerous with the administration of the trusts. He felt, however, that although the Charity Commissioners were not fully represented in the House, they had always responded to public opinion in recent years. There could be no doubt that many of the complaints made before the Committee in 1886 and 1887 had received full attention from the Commissioners. They had taken less money from the purposes of doles for the purposes of education, and had given more prominence to the technical side of education than formerly. In these points the Commissioners had acted in accordance with public opinion.

He doubted very much whether there would be anything gained by a fresh inquiry, but as the Government had assented to it he would not express his opposition to it further. The Charity Commissioners had passed safely through the somewhat severe ordeal to which they were exposed by the inquiries of 1884, 1886 and 1887. Though those Committees did make some recommendations, the action of the Commissioners was substantially vindicated, and they came forth from the inquiries with increased public confidence and with greater strength in the powers of a moral character which they possessed and which they had used so much to the advantage of the country.

*MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) said, that two complaints had been made in the course of the debate against the Mover and Seconder of the Motion before the House. One was that they had presented their case in so superficial a way as scarcely to justify the House in adopting the Motion, and the second was that they had suggested nothing in the way of remedy or change. With regard to the first complaint, he thought he was right in attributing the course pursued by his hon. Friends to a motive which hon. Gentlemen opposite should not fail to appreciate. His hon. Friends did not wish to appear, in asking for this Select Committee, to be moving a vote of censure on the Charity Commission. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Penrith had admitted that the Charity Commission was a very unpopular body. The hon. Gentleman had stated one cause; it would be quite easy to name others. But he intended to follow the good example of the Mover and Seconder. There were, however, two points to which he would make reference, because they formed part of the case for the appointment of a Select Committee. One was the delay—the intolerable delay as some expressed it—that took place in the discharge of certain duties of the Commission. He was not referring to the preparation of new schemes for the administration of charities, because those schemes might require protracted consideration. He was referring to the appointment of new trustees and matters of routine, which many people thought might be disposed of more quickly than they had been hitherto. He was in possession of

information which showed that in some cases such matters had been in hand 9, 12, and even 15 months, when a much shorter period would have sufficed to deal with them. Ten years ago so many complaints were made, that pressure was brought to bear on the Commissioners, with the result that there was considerable improvement; but now he was informed that the delays were as great as ever. The second point to which he wished to refer was the arrears of work which the Commissioners themselves acknowledged. His hon. Friend behind him said, “What is the use of considering the constitution of the Commission unless you give them more power?” Well, he (Mr. Carvell Williams) would ask, “What is the use of giving the Commission more power if they do not make use of the power they already possess?” The Report of 1892 contained the admission that there were 2,474 charities, the particulars of which had come into the possession of the Charity Commissioners, but which they had not yet had time to enter on their Registers. A second statement was that the accounts rendered by the trustees of charities to the Charity Commissioners, in accordance with the Act of Parliament, were nearly 8,000 fewer in 1892 than they were in 1889. The Commissioners accounted for that falling off partly by reason of the increased employment of their staff in preparing Statistical Returns for the County Councils and partly because of increased applications for information; so that it was impossible for the staff to give the same amount of attention to the accounts as was given in previous years. Well, if that had been the result of the creation of the County Councils, he left the House to judge how much greater results were likely to follow the passing of the Act to which reference had already been made. The hon. Member (Mr. Lowther) himself had told them that already applications for information were coming in at a great rate. The hon. Member might be sure that these were but as the drops before the coming shower. The hon. Member behind him (Mr. Rathbone) had on this occasion, as on some others, insisted on the necessity for investing the Commissioners with greater powers than they now possessed. He (Mr. Carvell Williams) said frankly

that he had always opposed that, because neither he nor a large section of the public had confidence in the administration of the existing Commission. They thought that it was not constituted so as to adequately represent public opinion, and that its methods and procedure were not in harmony with the characteristics of the times. As soon as the required changes in that direction were made, he for one should cease to be an opponent of the powers of the existing Commissioners. Complaint had been made by the hon. Member (Mr. Lowther) of the absence of remedial suggestions. Well, he (Mr. Carvell Williams) was inclined to suggest that, while on the one hand they might increase the powers of the Charity Commissioners, and give them more work to do, it would also be highly desirable to relieve them of some portion of their burdens. Their work was very easily divisible, and he could see no reason why the work of collecting information, and such like, should not be put upon County Councils and other Local Bodies. He was in favour of the adoption of the principle of devolution in the case of the Charity Commission, and of the popularising of that body. It had been pointed out that the functions of the Charity Commissioners were, to some extent, legal functions, and that they could not be discharged except by legal experts. He had no desire to take out of their hands work which required legal knowledge and experience. But there were other functions which might with great advantage be placed in other hands than theirs. He thought, too, that the Local Authorities should have much greater powers than they now possessed in regard to the framing of new charity schemes. He did not share in the feelings expressed very frequently while the Local Government Bill was before them, as to the paramount necessity of having regard to the wishes and intentions of donors and pious founders. He would modernise the charities, and remove the power of the dead hand as much as possible; but so long as these charities existed he desired that, by means of the Charity Commission and legislation in the House, they should be administered so as to produce the greatest good for the greatest possible number.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) said, he only desired to emphasise one remark, and that was as to the powers of Local Authorities and the consideration paid to them by the Charity Commissioners at the present time. His experience showed that the representations of Local Bodies to the Charity Commission, with reference to schemes bearing upon personal aggrandisement affecting their localities, had not received the attention they ought to have received. He thought that Local Authorities ought to have greater power to make their voices heard, and when the Committee came to consider the work of the Charity Commissioners they should take that into consideration. Another thing he strongly protested against was the aversion of the Commissioners to anything like popular control. They had erected barriers against the appointment of local trustees, thoroughly cognisant of the needs of a locality, in the shape of a rateable qualification. In this way they had prevented men being appointed as trustees, although the people in the district who were mainly interested in the trusts had conferred the highest honour upon those men by choosing them as their Representatives in Parliament. He thought that the time had come when the Charity Commissioners ought to pay more heed to local demands than they had paid in the past, and he hoped that one of the results of this investigation would be the sweeping away of the barriers to which he had referred. It was only with the one desire of emphasising the absurd position taken up by the Charity Commission that he had risen. He was delighted that a Committee was to be appointed.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, it was to be regretted that both the last speakers had introduced an element of controversy into the Debate which, happily, had been absent until now. For his own part, he welcomed more Parliamentary interest—he would not speak of control—in the administration of the Charity Commissioners. He would add that he hoped Parliament would do more now in relation to these matters. It was well to have control, but had Parliament always exercised that supervision and care in relation to the work of the Charity Commission which it should have done? He ventured to think that

in the past Parliament had neglected its duty in two respects. Educational schemes had been systematically brought before the House at a time when Parliamentary criticism was impossible—namely, after 12 o'clock at night. From that point of view Parliament itself was very much to blame, and if delay had taken place Parliament had contributed to it by its inability or unwillingness to find time to discuss these subjects. Take another case in which Parliament had neglected its duty. The Charity Commission was unpopular a few years ago because of the diversion of charitable funds to educational purposes. He did not say there was nothing to be said for it. In some cases the charitable funds were wasted and were better applied to education; but, on the other hand, the House had now come to the conclusion that that policy was both wrong and a mistake—that the diversion from the poor to the middle classes of those funds originally left for the poor was unjustifiable both in principle and practice. Parliament was to blame in consequence of the unseasonable hours at which such matters were discussed. He hoped that Parliament would take care in future that such discussions should take place at a time when they would be effective. They should give Local Bodies more control over the administration and application of charities. These bodies were on the spot, and had a better opportunity of judging what would be advantageous to them than anyone else, and a reform in that direction might very well take place. He only wished to add that, in his opinion, the Commissioners had done a great public work in the help they had given to technical education in London. Their action had not been marked by those delays and subjects of criticism which had been applied to them in other directions. As a Metropolitan Member, he thought London was greatly obliged to them for the gradual rise of those industrial institutions which were so material to the development of London.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether it is desirable to take measures to bring the action of the Charity

Commission more directly under the control of Parliament, and to give it more effectual means of dealing with the business which will come before it.

Resolved, That this House do immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.—(*Mr. Acland.*)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS ACCIDENTS.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN said, he was anxious to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the large number of accidents caused by the indiscriminate carrying of Pistols and Revolvers calls for immediate legislation."

He did not think he need offer any apologies to the House for bringing this matter before it. It was a subject he had taken an interest in for a long time, and the object of the Motion was one which he knew had the sympathy of many Members in all parts of the House. He had seen it stated in several newspapers that his bringing the matter forward was a work of supererogation, the Government having shown that they were in favour of the principle of the Motion. He was aware that the Government had brought in a Bill, and no one regretted more sincerely than he did that that measure had failed to pass into law, but he did not think the Motion was a work of supererogation, for the reason that he had put the word "immediate" into it. His only fear was that perhaps the insertion of that one word would prevent the proposal being received with favour by the Government, because he felt sure that if it had not been inserted the Government would have had a great deal of sympathy with the Motion. He had put the word in, because he felt that the time was come when this great and growing evil must be seriously and determinedly grappled with. He did not propose to go into the merits of the Pistols Bill of last year. He did not know that it would be in Order to do so, but he might be permitted to say that the Bill was in a rather peculiar position. The whole Session was a peculiar one, because, while it was practically given over to one Bill, the Government gave a pledge that no measure of a contentious nature should be proceeded

with. There was one hon. Member who took a strong and active part against the Bill, and, unfortunately, that Member was able to procure 37 hon. Gentlemen to go into the Lobby on a Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate, and these were quite sufficient to show the Government that there was some contentious matter in the Bill. The Government having given that pledge, of course there was nothing further for them to do but postpone the Bill. What hon. Gentlemen could have found contentious in the Bill he was bound to say he could not understand. They were not friendly to armed burglars, and they could not be in favour of allowing young children—mere babies—to go about carrying these absolutely useless and extremely dangerous weapons to the great danger of themselves and their unfortunate neighbours. Here was a case reported in all the newspapers yesterday—

“Fatal Revolver Accident.—A Jarrow Correspondent states that between 4 and 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon Miss Kathleen O'Brady Jones, daughter of the Rev. O'Brady Jones, Vicar of St. Luke's, Wallsend-on-Tyne, met with her death under painful circumstances. She had been taking part in a rehearsal for a concert which was to have been held yesterday evening, and was leaving the hall with friends, when a boy named Dewar, aged 15, presented a revolver with which he was playing and pulled the trigger, under the impression that it was unloaded. The weapon went off, the bullet being lodged in the girl's right temple. She died half an hour later. The revolver belonged to another lad, and was only purchased yesterday morning. Dewar, who is the son of respectable parents residing in the neighbourhood, is now in custody. The affair seems to have been purely accidental.”

In this case he did not ask for legislation against the boy. One sympathised almost as much with him and his relations as one did with the relations of the victim, but one did ask for legislation which should make it impossible for mere babies to go about carrying these very dangerous and useless weapons. The Home Secretary knew very well that the case was not an isolated one by any means. He could give the House countless instances of the same kind. It was the Home Secretary, he thought, who disliked so much legislation by Press Cutting Agencies. But Press Cutting Agencies had their uses. He (the Marquess of Carmarthen) had been for years a subscriber to Press Cutting

Agencies, and the only information he asked them to send him was accounts of accidents caused by pistols and revolvers. Since the Home Secretary introduced his Bill, he had asked from one of these Agencies the comments made upon the measure in the Press. He had been supplied with a large number, and they were all favourable to the Bill, save as to one or two practically small matters of detail. A further point was this—the coroners in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Devonshire had strongly supported the Pistols Bill, and juries had in every instance endorsed their remarks as to the danger attending the indiscriminate carrying of firearms. That alone was sufficient testimony to give him the right to demand legislation. But there was further evidence. There was the information supplied by the Home Office. The Return supplied last year showed that the number of fatal cases of this kind treated at hospitals was, in 1890, 10; in 1891, 22; and in 1892, 27; while the number of non-fatal cases was, in 1890, 59; in 1891, 72; and in 1892, 95; so that in each class there had been a steady increase; and he believed that that increase had been maintained in 1893, although the Returns supplied did not go beyond 1892. Of course, there were a number of cases which were not treated in the hospitals. In like manner the number of inquests in such cases had grown from 139 in 1890 to 180 in 1891, and to 217 in 1892. As he said, he had not the statistics for 1893, but from all he had been able to learn there was quite as much—he thought even more—injury inflicted by revolvers in 1893 than in 1892. An hon. Member for one of the Divisions of Lancashire, who opposed the Bill last year, said, “Why should not Englishmen have the right of protecting themselves?” No one wanted legislation, or asked for legislation, which would prevent responsible householders from arming themselves against burglars if they thought it right. What he did ask for was legislation which would strengthen the ordinary law, which would make it imperative on every one who carried arms to take out a licence, and would prevent young children from carrying dangerous weapons about. He had, he thought, said enough to show that there was some reason for this legislation. If the Go-

vernment took exception to his proposal that there should be "immediate" legislation, he hoped they would, at any rate, re-introduce the Pistols Bill, and send it to a Committee. They should do something to put a stop to this great and growing evil. He was conscious that he had not made out so strong a case as might have been made out. He wished some one of more power and influence had taken it in hand, but he had interested himself in the subject for a considerable time and felt keenly in regard to it.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, he would only say one or two words in reference to the Motion, as the noble Marquess had really exhausted the subject. It was within the knowledge of everyone that pistol accidents were increasing day by day. The law was already very stringent with regard to the carrying of revolvers by burglars. The punishment meted out to a robber who was armed was always much more severe than that to one who was unarmed. The proper way to deal with the indiscriminate use of revolvers was to place a heavy tax upon them. He should think that revolvers and pistols ought to be dealt with under the gun licence; and he should suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was, as he understood, somewhat short of money, that he should put the heaviest possible tax upon revolvers. This would be a very useful tax. The evil was growing year by year, and these weapons were becoming more and more toys, and could be bought for a very few shillings. From the instances quoted by the noble Lord, it was evident that they had become mere playthings in the hands of children. He did not think the word "immediate" ought to present any difficulty to the Government. An opportunity would occur when the Chancellor of the Exchequer could deal effectually with this growing evil by the simple expedient of putting a heavy tax on revolvers in the Budget Bill.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

"In the opinion of this House, the large number of Accidents caused by the indiscriminate carrying of Pistols and Revolvers calls for immediate legislation."—(*The Marquess of Carmarthen.*)

The Marquess of Carmarthen

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The noble Lord who moved this Motion, and the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, must know that so far as I am concerned they have been preaching to the converted. I have more than once expressed pretty much the same opinion as they have now expressed upon the danger of the indiscriminate carrying of revolvers, and last Session I did what I could to provide legislation to put a stop to the practice. I believe that if the House had not treated the measure which was introduced as a contentious measure we should have already seen its fruits, and that many of the accidents which had recently happened would have been avoided. I do not recede from the position I then took up, and I should only be too glad to see a Bill of the kind passed into law. I do not adopt the view altogether of the hon. Member for Preston that this is a matter which can be efficiently dealt with by taxation. Inquiries which we have made convince us that it would not be sufficient to meet the evil to impose a higher tax. I am satisfied that the lines upon which we proposed to proceed were right—that any person who buys one of these pistols should be compelled to produce a licence; that each pistol should be identified by a particular mark; and that the seller should enter the name and address of the purchaser in a book, just as is now done in the case of the sale of poisons. These are practically the proposals which were in the Bill of last year, and it is not thought that these provisions would hamper or seriously injure the trade. The Motion of the noble Lord asks us to say that this is a matter which calls for immediate legislation. I say frankly that if I saw a possibility of the Bill which I introduced last year being treated as a non-contentious measure I would re-introduce it with pleasure; and if in the course of the Session I receive satisfactory assurances which convince me that it will pass as a non-contentious measure, I will undertake to say that I will re-introduce it. At the same time, I am bound to acknowledge that after the

experience of last year, when no less than 37 hon. Gentlemen voted for the adjournment of the Debate, thereby strangling the Bill for the Session, I do not see any prospect that the measure, if re-introduced, would be treated as non-contentious. Therefore, I do not see how I can accede to the Motion of the noble Lord, which declares that this is a matter for immediate legislation. If I were to do so on the part of the Government the Bill would enter into competition with, and even take precedence of, other measures to which Her Majesty's Government are already pledged. While agreeing most heartily with the noble Lord as to the necessity for legislation on the subject, I am afraid that I must ask the House to negative the Motion as introduced.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, it ought to be borne in mind that the claim was put forward that certain Bills should be treated as non-contentious at a time when the House was brought together under exceptional circumstances. What took place was the outcome of an attempt to improve the Bill. Apart from that, he must say that there were many Parliamentary chances arising during the Session which might be taken advantage of if proper vigilance were exercised in order to pass the Bill. But, meanwhile, he should like to ask the Home Secretary whether it was not possible to do more to meet the necessities of the case by administrative action? When he was in the Department a Circular was sent out to the authorities inviting them to increased vigilance in prosecutions for the carrying of pistols, the idea being to bring home to the public mind the fact that a pistol was a gun under the Gun Licensing Act of 1870. There was no doubt that many people were under the impression that a pistol could be carried without a licence, and that they believed that it was only for the carrying of a gun that a licence was required. He must say that he had found a certain supineness on the part of the Inland Revenue Authorities in prosecuting persons who carried revolvers without a licence. Their object was to get as much as possible for the Revenue, and they did not see any use in attempting to exact a £10 penalty from the class of people whom they wished to stop carrying

revolvers. He could not help thinking that something more might be done by closer administrative action. He did not quite see why the Motion of the noble Lord should be negatived, because it was not at all necessary to adhere to the word "immediate"; and he contended also, that even if that word were adopted, it would not involve the dislocation of the Government programme of legislation. He remembered an occasion when the Conservative Party was in Office, when a Motion was brought forward relating to the use of schools for public meetings. The Motion was not resisted, and it was passed unanimously; and the claim was put forward that the Government ought to postpone all other legislation in order to comply with the terms of that Motion. But that, of course, was an untenable claim, and he was sure that the Home Secretary need not oppose the Motion of his noble Friend upon any such ground. He could promise that the same amount of support would be again received from the Opposition for the Bill. It was his belief that the central principle of the Bill of last year was a most valuable one, and he thought it should be made an offence for a person to carry a revolver in a public place.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) said, he desired to cordially acknowledge the support which the Bill of last year had received. He did not agree with the last speaker that there had been supineness on the part of the Inland Revenue Authorities. There were very great difficulties in the way of the Inland Revenue officers, because it was not easy to ascertain who were carrying revolvers, and who were not. Unless in the actual commission of an offence the necessary evidence was not forthcoming. Moreover, they found that it was of no avail to prosecute children for offences against the Inland Revenue. Magistrates would not convict in cases of the kind. Another point in connection with the matter was that there was no power to confiscate the firearms. The Government, however, would do what they could to ascertain the feeling of hon. Members who opposed the Bill last year, and if it appeared that the measure would not be further opposed the Government would re-introduce it.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that with all deference to what had fallen from the First Commissioner of Works he wanted to point out that the real matter of complaint was that the gun licence was not applied to pistols and revolvers. If a man carried a gun without a licence he was prosecuted, but if he carried a pistol without a licence he was not prosecuted at all.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: It is a question of evidence.

SIR R. TEMPLE: Evidence in regard to a pistol would be as good as evidence in regard to the carrying of a gun. If a man is proved to be carrying a pistol without a licence he is liable to prosecution, and ought to be prosecuted.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: You can see if a man is carrying a gun, but you cannot see if he is carrying a pistol.

SIR R. TEMPLE: But our argument is that there is always evidence of the pistol having been carried in all cases in which an accident happens. Why are not the persons who carry these pistols prosecuted? We believe that it is the slackness of the authorities in prosecuting that is accountable for this condition of things. If the right hon. Gentleman asks what we propose, we say that more stringent steps should be taken by the Executive at once, and that the Public Prosecutor and his officials should be more vigilant in enforcing the law with reference to the carrying of pistols without a licence, especially in the case of young people. When an accident happens, there is never any doubt as to the actual carrying of the pistol, but the difficulty is that there has been no prosecutor.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 118; Noes 54.—(Division List, No. 8.)

Main Question again proposed.

THE INCOME TAX.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) drew attention to the necessity for some juster system of Income Tax being adopted by which a lower rate of tax should be charged on incomes derived from industry to that charged on incomes derived from realised capital. He said, it was somewhat unfortunate that this could only be an academical discussion, as the Rules of

the House prohibited more than one Division, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be grateful to him for bringing forward the subject in time for his Budget arrangements. This was a most opportune moment for discussing the incidence of the Income Tax. For four or five years past he had always been met by Chancellors of the Exchequer on both sides of the House by the objection that, however much they sympathised with the general principles of the Motion, however much there was to be said for it, they had arranged their Budgets, but would think of it for another year. A new Budget of a most startling character was now promised, and he would suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer a solution of a very difficult problem. This was not a new subject. The incidence of Income Tax had been a burning question for many years. It had been found that the more the screw was put on, the more the tax realised, though he did not wish to say for a moment that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer was anxious to screw out more than his predecessors. But the fact remained that year by year a larger amount was being realised by the Income Tax, and raised from a deeper and poorer stratum of society. Many thought that trade and industry were not affected by this tax, but, in fact, no tax more affected the trade and commerce of our country than this particular one. Glancing at its history, in 1842, when it was reintroduced by Sir Robert Peel on its present basis, 1d. in the £1 brought in £850,000, while at the present time 1d. in the £1 produced more than £2,000,000 sterling, showing how the tax had been developed in the last 50 years. That was, no doubt, a satisfactory proof of increased prosperity and wealth, but it had another side. It had been said that this being a tax upon the rich which they could afford to pay it did not matter much what the Chancellor of the Exchequer imposed, but that was not the fact, for yearly the tax was pressing harder upon the lower middle and poorer classes of society who were engaged in the work of the country. By the last Returns in 1889 under Schedule D., which included all the workers, professional persons, merchants, people in trade, and others earning incomes, representing one-third of the whole pro-

Mr. H. Gladstone

ceeds of the tax, 436,000 persons paid. Of those, 215,000, or about half, paid upon incomes under £200 a year. That was a very startling fact. Another quarter of the whole number, 106,000, paid on incomes of £200 to £300, and 63,000 from £300 to £500. In fact, the 385,000 persons paid on incomes of £500 and under, while only 50,000 paid on more. It would be interesting to know that only 21,000 paid on £1,000 a year and upwards. This referred to England and Wales. In Ireland, of course, the proportion of small incomes was even larger. A slight study of the Returns showed that more and more the tax was pressing upon the poorer classes of society. From 1843 to 1870 the numbers assessed at the poorer end remained almost stationary, but in the 15 years from 1874 to 1889 an immense change had taken place in the incidence of the tax upon these classes of the community. The smaller incomes partially exempted had largely decreased from £21,500,000 among 358,000 persons to £8,750,000 among 215,000 under £200 a year. The slightly larger incomes had increased from nearly £9,000,000 among 39,000 persons in 1874 to nearly £13,000,000 among 106,000 persons in 1889. This was very hard upon the lower middle classes, and showed that the net was always being drawn tighter and tighter. From £300 to £500 there had also been a large increase, but only a slight increase from £500 to £1,000, while upon the incomes above £1,000 paying the tax there had been a considerable decrease. Those facts would not be gainsaid by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they showed that more and more the Income Tax was being paid by the lower middle and poorer classes of the community, the classes who ought, on the contrary, to receive the most consideration, and whose industry was largely instrumental in making the country. That consideration alone ought to force on the Chancellor of the Exchequer the importance of imposing a fairer incidence of this tax than existed at present. It was originally intended, as its name implied, to be assessed upon incomes; but it was now far more, for it was charged upon gross not nett income. No allowance was made for repairs to property or depreciation of machinery; assessments were made upon buildings and plant

with absolutely no set-off. Again, in many cases, the tax was levied upon much larger incomes than people actually enjoyed. That also had a very important bearing upon the subject. It was often said that many people made false returns and paid upon less than they really earned. That might be so, but these matters were looked after very carefully, and in most cases people paid upon more than they should rather than upon less. Another great grievance in connection with this tax was the mode of collection. They were grateful to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer for abolishing the system of poundage, but there was still a grievance in reference to appeals. The whole system of appeal was, according to many letters he had received on the subject, a farce. The unfortunate person assessed was not allowed any advice or even to be present in the room while the assessors fixed the assessment, and there was no appeal whatever. An amusing instance at Ealing had come to his knowledge, where the owner of a property stated exactly its cost, and was supported by a surveyor, but, nevertheless, he was assessed at infinitely more than the property should have carried. Taking all those points into consideration, it was clear that a much fairer system was demanded by the public. The only way in which this tax could be fairly adjusted was by making a distinction between industrial and spontaneous incomes derived from real property or securities. Spontaneous incomes and those derived from labour should not be as at present, assessed in the same way. An enormous difference existed between the positions of two men receiving £200 a year each, one from, say, Consols, and the other from his work, whether as professional man, doctor, clerk, or shop-keeper. In the one case the man might fairly spend every shilling of his income; but the man who had to earn his £200 was already taxed to an enormous extent. As a prudent man he must insure his life, and he must put by something to provide for accidents or being out of employment. He would probably be taxed by the exigencies of life as a wise and thrifty man to the extent of £30 of his income, or 15 per cent., paying ordinary taxes in addition like everybody else. That £30 a year the other man

might spend, and to tax both equally was absolutely to discourage and even prevent provision for the future in the case of the income-earner, who would so far be greatly handicapped. In foreign countries—France, for example—spontaneous incomes only were taxed. Nobody would gainsay that the two classes of incomes were totally different, and that a man who had an income coming in whether he was well or ill, working or idle, which would on his death be continued for his wife and family, was in an entirely different position from a man whose income was absolutely dependent upon his continuing in health and work. This had been pointed out long ago. In 1842, when Sir Robert Peel reintroduced the tax, Lord Brougham said in the House of Lords—

“It is expedient to make a distinction between incomes arising from capital of every description and incomes arising from labour merely by levying a smaller proportion upon the latter than upon the former.”

Lord Brougham was a great authority, and so far from being an aristocrat in anything he was one of the Leaders of the Democratic Party at the time. In the House of Commons also an Amendment was moved to omit the words “profession or trade, employment or avocation.” That was the very question he was now raising, and the Amendment was supported by such well-known men as Lord John Russell and Mr. Hume. Against the opinion of such authorities, it was strange that this tax should have been allowed for 50 years to go on being levied in so obviously unfair a manner. Certainly, it was only regarded as a temporary tax in the first instance, and it was supposed would soon be given up. But it had always been, and probably would always be, found one of the main taxes on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could rely. He thought he had made out a clear case, that it was most unfair to levy this tax upon spontaneous and industrial incomes alike. But it had been said that if a change were made, rich people receiving industrial incomes would benefit, large merchants, bankers, barristers, and others, who could afford to pay a higher rate. That was quite true, but the objection could easily be got over by fixing a limit, no matter where it was put, £1,000 or £500, so long as the principle

was adopted that industrial incomes should not be taxed at the same rate as those otherwise derived. If that could be carried out, it would be the beginning of a great change, and would certainly make the Income Tax fairer in every sense. Another objection was that poor people sometimes had small and spontaneous incomes. But those persons were so far, of course, better off than people dependent upon industrial incomes, and there would be no objection to their being allowed a rebate at present under a certain amount. A third great objection was, that it would cause enormous trouble to make a change. No doubt; but that was no reason why the change should not be carried out, if it was fair and reasonable. It was the Chancellor of the Exchequer's business so to frame his Budget that it would work fairly smoothly, and without hardship or injury to any particular class. However, we had at present a system of differential rates for different classes of income. Schedule B was not only at a different rate from other Schedules, but it varied for different parts of the United Kingdom. Different rates were imposed for England, Scotland, and Ireland. Taking all these facts together, he urged that he had distinctly made out a case for an alteration in the present system of levying the Income Tax. The Income Tax represented more than a sixth of the taxes of the country. There had no doubt been several Committees on this subject, including one which sat in 1861, and in connection with which separate Reports were issued by the late Mr. Lowe, the late Mr. Hubbard, and the late Sir Stafford Northcote. In 1861, however, the whole subject of taxation was different from what it was now, and it was pointed out at the time that it would not be fair to alter the system of the Income Tax unless there was an alteration of many other taxes, and especially of the Succession Duty. Since that time great changes had taken place, and the pressure of the Income Tax had been growing more and more upon the middle and lower strata of society. It was urged by some that there should be a graduated Income Tax. In one of the organs of the Government it had been suggested that persons with an income of £100 should pay a 1d. tax, and persons with £200 2d., the tax increasing by 1d.

for every £100 of income. Well, he had always held the opinion that the poorer persons in this country paid more per £1 than the richer persons, but he believed that a differential Income Tax was practically impossible to carry out. There would be so much temptation on the part of men to reduce their incomes, because if they went up to a certain amount the rate at which they would have to pay would be very largely increased, that he thought such a system would be very pernicious. The proposal he advocated was, however, of a totally different character, and was infinitely fairer in every way than that of a graduated Income Tax. The pressure upon industrial incomes was becoming greater and greater. The amount of the incomes derived from past savings was becoming greater from year to year, and the relative proportions of the two kinds of income showed that the spontaneous incomes were much larger than the industrial incomes. It might be asked what effect the system he advocated would have upon the Revenue. Of course, hon. Members could not conceal from themselves the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was more in need of money than he had been on former occasions, and it might be said that this was an inopportune time for raising the question. He could not see that this was so, because his argument was not that there should be a decrease in the burden, but that the burden should be better adjusted. If the smaller industrial incomes were relieved or were not increased it would be perfectly fair to add to the spontaneous incomes an amount which would be quite sufficient to make up the difference. He acknowledged fully that in his view the tax on industrial incomes might ultimately be done away with altogether, as in France, and that the Income Tax might be levied on spontaneous incomes only. He did not, however, propose this at present, although such a system would do away with nearly all the difficulties of taxation. All he proposed now was that they should get the wedge in, and should make some difference between the two classes of income. It was possibly unwise from one point of view to tax past thrift, but what was desired was to encourage people to be thrifty. The difference between the spontaneous in-

come and the industrial income was so great, however, that some such proposal was necessary. The man who had to work his hardest in order to pull along was handicapped by the Income Tax. He was bound to set aside from 10 to 15 per cent. of his earnings in order to provide against sickness, want of work, early death, and other contingencies. When people, however, pointed out that they were taxed on their small incomes on the same scale as men who derived an absolutely permanent income from an investment, hon. Members would see that it was very difficult for those who advocated thrift to reply to them. He trusted that, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer must be cogitating how to arrange the fiscal burdens of the coming year, the right hon. Gentleman would take this great opportunity of saying that he would even in a small degree make a change by which a man's industrial income should be taxed at a lower rate than his spontaneous income. If the right hon. Gentleman would do this he would do that which he (Mr. Bartley) was sure would appear just and fair to a large part of Her Majesty's subjects.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The object of this Debate is to induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the eve of the Budget, to discuss the exact principles on which particular taxes should be levied. I have never known such an attempt succeed, and I have never known such an attempt made in a bolder, or, I may say, a more audacious manner than this has been made by the hon. Member. He must, however, excuse me if I say that "in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." I will not discuss with him whether there ought to be a graduated Income Tax, or whether there should be a difference made between small incomes and large incomes, and whether there ought to be distinctions made in the incomes derived from one source and incomes derived from other sources. Such a discussion would be premature to-night. The hon. Member will have opportunities of expressing his opinions in a much more effective manner than he can do at the present moment, and I will, therefore, ask him to allow me to postpone my statement until it can

have more real effect than it can have on the present occasion. With reference to his arguments, they are, no doubt, excellent, but they are not novel. I have heard that speech made for 25 years.

MR. BARTLEY: I said so several times.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I should say that altogether I have heard that speech and these arguments 45 times in the House of Commons.

MR. BARTLEY: Never answered.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: It was supposed that there was an answer given in 1853 by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). The speech has been made year after year. Mr. Hubbard, a lineal ancestor, in a financial sense, of the hon. Member, brought the subject forward year after year, and stated precisely the same arguments. In 1861 a Committee was appointed, of which Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Hubbard were leading members. As the hon. Member says his arguments have never been answered, I would ask him to see the Report prepared by Sir Stafford Northcote as a Member of that Committee. I think everybody would consider that Report a conclusive answer to the hon. Member. If you were to apply to a man with an industrial income a lower rate of tax than you applied to a person who had an annuity of £100 in the funds, the result would be to create an absurdity. The distinction between various incomes must depend rather upon the amount than upon the character of such incomes. It could not be contended that the owner of a great brewery, for example, should pay at a lower rate than an annuitant, because the annuity proceeded from a different source. There is a great deal in the hon. Member's speech with which I agree, and a great deal with which I differ, but he must excuse me if I postpone until another occasion telling him with what part of the speech I agree and with what part I differ.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, he did not think the very interesting figures brought forward by the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) had justified the conclusion he had adduced from them. The hon. Member said that only 50,000 of the taxpayers in Schedule D paid on incomes

of over £500. It would, however, be found that an immense number of those who had incomes of over £500 under Schedule D had also incomes which came under other Schedules. Then the hon. Member said that there were only 20,000 persons under Schedule D with over £1,000 a year, and that the number was decreasing. He (Sir J. Lubbock) did not think anyone could imagine for a moment that there were really fewer persons with incomes of £1,000 a year under Schedule D than there were some years ago. Surely everybody knew that the number of such persons must be much larger than it was formerly. Perhaps the explanation was, that there had been a great tendency of late years for small firms to be absorbed into larger ones, small breweries and other undertakings to be absorbed into larger ones, so that the returns which used to be made by a considerable number of persons were now made as one Return by a Joint Stock Company. The hon. Member had suggested that the owner of Consols ought to pay at a higher rate than the person who derived his income from his own exertions. Consols, however, could not be taxed as Consols, or faith would be broken with the public taxpayer, and a very bad example would be set to foreign countries. It would be inequitable to tax Consols as such, nor did we do so—we taxed income, and the holder of Consols paid on his income. A higher rate of tax could, therefore, not be equitably placed upon Consols than upon other incomes.

MR. BARTLEY said, he had not suggested anything of the kind. He had only referred to Consols as one of the specimens of spontaneous incomes.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK said, his point was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not deal with Consols unless he was dealing with all incomes. Consols could not be taxed, although the income derived from them could be. The next item of spontaneous income referred to by his hon. Friend was that derived from land, but it had been a very decreasing income of late years, and he could not think that this would be at all a happy moment to choose for adding to the burdens now resting upon the agriculturists. As to houses, a difficulty of a different character arose.

The amount required for repairs differed immensely in different kinds of houses. The moment the question of an allowance for repairs was introduced the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be landed in a labyrinth of difficulties from which it would be impossible to escape. His hon. Friend said that it would be easy to distinguish between "spontaneous" and "industrial" incomes. He thought it would be almost impossible. His hon. Friend said that a man who had a spontaneous income was secure, and need not save. Income from savings might be spontaneous, but was not necessarily secure. Could it be said that a man whose money was invested in such securities as Portuguese or Greek funds had a secure income, or that the income of a man who had invested in some industrial undertaking was necessarily secure? Then, how was a distinction to be drawn between incomes derived from Bank of England Stock and incomes derived from the Stock of a small bank, or between incomes derived from a small brewery and a large brewery? The hon. Member had suggested a different kind of tax upon concerns making £1,000 a year from that upon concerns making £500 a year, but of course the number of shareholders or partners would have to be taken into account, and here another difficulty would arise. The hon. Member added the injustice of Income Tax was worse because it had been going on for so long. He (Sir J. Lubbock) should rather have drawn the opposite inference, because, happily, an inequality which might be very great at first was, if continued long enough, compensated for to a certain extent by other considerations. It was, however, perfectly true that the members of the legal and medical profession derived their incomes from the exercise of their brains, and that other persons might perhaps derive a similar amount of income without any exertion to themselves. The truth was that no tax could be a just and fair one. We must regard the taxation of the country as a whole, and if we found that some taxes pressed heavily on some classes, we should find that others pressed heavily on others, and the result was that some sort of justice was arrived at. Taxes derived from the Customs pressed, no doubt, with severity on certain classes of the people. That

injustice was made up to a certain extent by the Income Tax, and in that way one tax to a certain extent compensated for the inequalities that existed in another. The matter was very carefully gone into by the very strong Committee of 1861. Nobody could read the very interesting Blue Book which related to that Committee and fail to see the extraordinary difficulties there was in dealing with the question in the manner proposed by the hon. Member. At the same time, great injustice would be done unless the Income Tax was kept within a moderate and reasonable limit. If it were raised much more than at present all the evils that had been pointed out would be aggravated. There were two points which he thought it desirable that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should consider in his Budget. He had never himself been able to see why the English farmer should be called upon to pay a different rate of Income Tax from the Scotch or the Irish farmer. If there was any reason for a difference originally there was no such reason now, particularly at a time when the agriculturists were suffering so greatly. He urged that they should be placed on the same footing. The other point on which he wished to say a word was as regards the assessment of industrial incomes. One great compensating circumstance in connection with the Income Tax used to be, that in the case of incomes derived from trade it was taken on the average of three years. If a man had made an average income of £1,000 a year for the previous three years and made more than that amount he could not be called upon to pay more than he returned, but if he made less than the £1,000 he was allowed a rebate. It was calculated by the Head of the Inland Revenue Department before the Committee of 1861 that this privilege was practically equivalent to an allowance of 30 per cent. That had been altered without, so far as he could learn, any sanction to the change having been given by the House, and he submitted that the old method of calculation should be revived, which would to some extent meet the objections urged by the hon. Member for Islington.

GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) said, he should like to point out a case of great hardship in the levying of Income Tax on industrial incomes.

It was the case where male and female school teachers married. When single their incomes were exempted from the tax, but when married the joint incomes were liable. In some cases the expenses of married couples might be less than those of the parties when single, but that could not be so where there were families. He trusted the Secretary to the Treasury would look into the matter. There were not very many cases, he should imagine, but there certainly were some.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that no doubt the difficulties in the way of making distinctions as to the manner in which income was derived or in graduating the Income Tax were almost insuperable; but the difficulty had been overcome in some of the Colonies by substituting for a tax on income a tax on property. If the House would consider the matter for a moment they would see that this met all the difficulties and all the objections urged against making the suggested distinctions. Foreexample, a person possessed £100,000; whether he invested the money in Consols or in foreign securities he paid equally on the £100,000. Though his income from foreign securities would be larger his risk would be greater. The system adopted with reference to incomes derived from trades or professions was to fix the number of years' purchase which a trade or profession was worth. A man who was making £3,000 a year from any trade or profession would not pay in the same way as the man who had invested £100,000 in Consols; he would pay 10 years' purchase, or £30,000. In this way the distinction would be kept up very clearly between incomes derived from investments and incomes which were not of that permanent character, derived from trades and professions. This had been done in the colonies, and he had never clearly understood why the same system had not been adopted in this country. He was not going into the question raised by the hon. Gentleman opposite. The hon. Gentleman had fairly stated his case, and, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, it had been stated again and again that the objections to it were technical.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (London) said, he thought the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had treated

the interesting speech of the hon. Member for Islington with hardly as much respect as it deserved. He had said that he had heard it 45 times before. Well, he (Mr. Gibbs) should certainly think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's reply had been made 45 hundred times before. There were two answers always made to anyone who proposed to lighten any tax. The first was that the Budget had not yet been brought out, and that therefore the thing was altogether premature; and the other was that the Budget had been settled upon, and it was altogether too late. It could hardly be denied that the hon. Member had made out a very good case, whether it had been made out before or not, and so far as he (Mr. Gibbs) understood, the only thing urged against it was that it was very difficult to amend the tax. No doubt it was difficult, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his officers were, as they all knew, very clever people, and he was sure that it was not beyond their powers to lighten the burden. It had been pointed out very clearly what great injustice was done by the way in which taxes were altered in the House without anybody knowing anything about it. The manner in which the Income Tax was assessed had been altered, and many people were very much surprised when by practical experience they discovered that that alteration had been made. He trusted the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consider these matters, and endeavour to give some relief where it was very much wanted.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I wish, for the convenience of the House, just to mention that I do not intend to bring forward the Motion which stands in my name upon the Paper with regard to alien emigration. Looking at the present state of the House, it seems to me desirable to postpone that Motion to some more favourable opportunity. But before the discussion in which the House is now engaged terminates, I should like to enter a *caveat* against the presumption that the Members of the Opposition generally endorse the doctrines which my hon. Friend has laid down. My hon. Friend holds views with regard to taxation with which I, at any rate, cannot concur. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of

the Exchequer has stated that a case has never been known in which a gentleman holding his position has been "drawn." The right hon. Gentleman has no disregard for the process of establishing precedents, and I think that everyone who listened to his reply to my hon. Friend must have come to the conclusion that my hon. Friend, at any rate, has beaten the record in having been the first Member who has succeeded in "drawing" a Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman proceeded to reply to his own argument as to what had been the invariable practice in regard to his predecessors, for he certainly was most successfully "drawn." As to the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I do not wish to go into the points on which he dwelt. I was relieved to find that he does not contemplate in his Budget embarking in some of the transactions suggested by my hon. Friend. My hon. Friend guarded himself against being supposed to favour rash experiments of the kind he spoke of; but, at the same time, if incomes below a certain point are to be exempted from taxation, then the bulk of the Revenue must be raised from a small portion of the tax-paying community, and when that is taken concurrently with the suggestion which, I am afraid, is not altogether without sympathy on the Treasury Bench, under which those who are to pay the great bulk of the taxes have less electoral power than even that which they now possess, I think it will make most of us chary of endorsing such a proposal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of attempts which have been made to discriminate between various classes of incomes. As I understood my hon. Friend, he proposed that incomes derived from what he called industries, including profits in business and trade, whether great or small, were in a different category from incomes derived from settled property, whether real or personal. My hon. Friend does not speak benevolently of the unfortunate small freeholder. I for some years represented a large number of small freeholders, upon whom I know well that taxation presses very hardly. My hon. Friend says he does not propose to diminish the amount of money at the disposal of the Chancellor of the Exche-

quer, but that he only proposes to make the knapsack fit more evenly on the shoulders. What does that mean? It means that under my hon. Friend's suggestion the other Income Tax payers would pay more than they have done hitherto, which I think would be a great hardship upon them. I must own there is something to be said as to the different sources from which incomes are derived. My hon. Friend was on fair ground when he dwelt on the general proposition, but the moment he came to deal with it in detail his difficulties commenced. Now, my hon. Friend spoke of the interest a person has in a sum of money during his lifetime, and suggested that at his death that interest is available to those who succeed him. I am not sure that that is always the case. My hon. Friend knows very well that there are settlements which preclude persons entitled to a beneficial interest for life from disposing of the funds in a manner in which they may think fit. Then my hon. Friend talked about insurance. He said that a prudent person in receipt of an income of modest dimensions is bound to set aside a part of his income, at least, as an insurance fund. I would remind him that a prudential consideration would equally apply in a large number of cases to persons in receipt of incomes even from settled funds. The Secretary to the Treasury realises that. What I wish to enter a protest against is any system of what is called graduated taxation. I understood my hon. Friend to suggest the exemption of incomes up to £200 a year from Income Tax. I do not think that that would be at all wholesome advice for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take as tendered to him on behalf of the Conservative Party. As I say, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, unlike any of his predecessors, has been "drawn," and I hope the result of this discussion will be to show that any wild scheme that might have been suggested by hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House tending in the direction of differential taxation and graduated Income Tax would certainly not meet with the approval of the great mass of Members in this House.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said, he wished in a word to endorse what had fallen from the right hon. Baronet in regard to the taxation of

farmers' incomes. It had been a matter of complaint for years that farmers' incomes were taxed on different scales in England to those in Scotland and Ireland, and he would respectfully suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this would be a particularly happy year to put the English farmer on the same footing as the Scotch and Irish farmers. Scotland and Ireland had been favoured by Providence with a particularly bountiful season, while the English farmer had been impoverished to an unprecedented degree. It would make small difference to the Revenue, and would be a welcome mark of sympathy with the English farmer, who would be still more grateful if he could be furnished at all with an income on which to pay, but he was afraid that to furnish that was not in the power of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In regard to the main question they were debating, it should not be forgotten that the Income Tax was only a matter of pence in the pound after all; but the rates were a matter of shillings in the pound, and personal property and earned incomes were exempt from the burden of the rates.

FLOATING DERELICTS IN THE ATLANTIC.

MR. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) said, he wished to call attention to the danger to life resulting from floating derelicts in the Atlantic. He should not attempt to occupy the time of the House except for two reasons: first, because he believed the matter to be one of very great urgency—a matter of very great importance to large numbers of people not only in this country but of every country in England and America. Great numbers of passengers crossed the Atlantic every week, and those passengers were all subject to the possibility of a momentary catastrophe which they could not very well contend against. The catastrophe was very different to every other danger to which sailors were liable. There were remedies against other risks, such as fire, but at night they had no remedy against floating derelicts, which were absolutely unseen. He had done all he could as a private Member to direct the attention of the Government to this most important subject. He had put questions to them,

Mr. Everett

and he was bound to say that he had been received with great courtesy by the President of the Board of Trade and the Secretary to the Admiralty. These gentlemen, however, had shuffled off responsibility from one to the other. The question was one which could not be deferred, and, in order that it might receive the attention it merited, he took upon himself to ask a question of the late Prime Minister, which was one of the last questions which the right hon. Gentleman answered on the Treasury Bench. The right hon. Gentleman had given a most satisfactory answer, stating that the matter was one of very great importance, and that it would receive the attention of the Government. It did, in fact, receive the attention of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman had not sent despatches, as had hitherto been the practice, but in answer to urgent questions put from time to time he had telegraphed to Washington to obtain further information. That further information had been asked for since, and they had been told that the Government were considering the matter. Questions of this kind the Government had been considering for a long time, and it appeared to him that the time had now come when the House ought to take some action for themselves. A Petition had been presented to the present Prime Minister signed by 800 masters of vessels, representing 31,000 sailors. The lives of these 31,000 sailors were of as much concern to the House of Commons as the lives of anyone in the country. They should look after those who were in peril on the seas, and they should take care they were not liable to this terrible and sudden catastrophe. It was their duty to limit the danger as much as possible, and they had the experience of another Government as to what could be done, because the American Government had had two of their men-of-war fitted up for the destruction of these derelicts.

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Order! I have just ascertained that notice has been given for the Second Reading of a Bill on this subject; therefore, the discussion is out of Order.

FRANCE AND SIAM.

SIR R. TEMPLE hoped he should not be out of place if he once more pressed upon Her Majesty's Government the

question of the production of the Papers relating to Siam. They had been promised from time to time that these Papers should be produced, but the hope deferred by the Government made the heart of the Opposition sick. This question of Siam was one on which large sections of Her Majesty's subjects felt considerable anxiety. They feared the British interests had to some extent been sacrificed, that the commercial interests especially had not been safeguarded, and that France had been allowed to obtain a position with regard to Siam that might seriously compromise the independence of that country in the future. He was sorry the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs was not in his place, but it was well known that they intended to raise this question, as their object was to obtain the production of the Papers so as to enable them to judge how far their Foreign Office had been able to go with the Government of France in this matter; whether the Siamese had really been victimised, and whether the independence of the Kingdom, which was co-terminous to the south-eastern portion of our Eastern Empire, had been properly protected or not. The extraordinary delays on the part of the French Government in bringing matters to an issue had, he would not say been viewed with suspicion, but had caused grave apprehension as to whether or not France contemplated the ultimate absorption of Siam. They were loth to take an unkindly view of the motive and conduct of our gallant neighbours, but there had been so much high handedness in the conduct of France, such undue precipitancy in proceeding against Siam, such excessive severity in the execution of terms, that our French neighbours must not be offended with them if they desired to make a stand on behalf of the British side of the question, and endeavour to press the matter forward. He was glad the hon. Baronet had now come to his place, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would be able at once to inform them whether there was a chance of these Papers being soon delivered. They were told before Easter that immediately after Easter the Papers should be presented, but Easter had come and gone, and yet they did not obtain the Papers. If they seemed unduly hasty in the matter their answer was that they were the only parties who

had not got these Papers. Their French neighbours had got their Papers; the French Parliament, the French public and French politicians all knew the French view of the question; but the British Parliament and public did not yet know the views of their own Government. They did not know how these Papers would affect the general question between the two nations, how far they would be able to vindicate their own rights and position, or whether or not they ought to be satisfied with the position of Siam. All interested in this really burning question, which might be of enormous importance in the future, were unaware what considerations were hung up until they could understand what the Papers would show. The future independence of Siam was really the main object, and he would warn the Government that, unless some joint understanding could be arrived at between France and England in respect to the future of Siam, that India would probably not be safe. This was becoming a double pressure; it was a double-barrelled opposition to the progress of the British Empire in the East. There was a war-cloud hanging over both Continents, one on the side of Russia and the other on the side of France, and he did not know which cloud was darkest or the most menacing; but it would be a most dangerous concatenation of events for England if ever there should be a war in which France and Russia were on the one side and England on the other. Just imagine India between two such fires, but that was what they were being threatened with by Russia on the one side and France on the other. He had no doubt all this was as well known to Her Majesty's Government as it was to them, but they would like this knowledge to show itself in such vigorous action as might keep back those two advancing Powers, that should keep Russia in check on the one side and France in check on the other. There was no doubt this matter of Siam had greatly increased the risks and peril of India which, Heaven knows, were great enough before. He did not think anything so serious to the future safety of India could have happened than this matter of Siam. It had long been foreseen by Anglo-Indian statesmen, and warning after warning had been given. After all, what did the

British Government say? That England had no immediate concern in the quarrel between France and Siam. England had the most vital concern, and to say that, on the part of the British Government, was entirely to give the case away and throw it to the wolves. That was what had happened, and he said it with great regret, because in all other respects he was one of those who greatly admired the manner in which our foreign affairs had been built up. The hope that after all some remedy might be found to mitigate this danger must be the excuse for troubling the Government in the matter. No doubt, it reminded them of the hammer and the tongs, but they were obliged to go on hammering. These warnings from Anglo-Indian sources ought to be far more respected by the British Parliament than they were. Every one of the misfortunes that had happened in Central Asia had been predicted. Every single prophecy in regard to the advance of Russia had been verified. Now similar warnings were given in respect to the advance of France, and they saw how little they were regarded. Still, they would go on warning and warning in order that the perils that threatened India might be somewhat mitigated. If a sound and conciliatory policy on the one hand, though firm and resolute on the other, were adopted, it would be still possible to preserve the independence of Siam.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) said, he did not propose to follow the hon. Baronet in the discussion of the general question because it had been discussed in the House on previous occasions, and since it was last discussed nothing new had happened in the situation to render it desirable that it should be again discussed on the part of the Government. The hon. Baronet's views had often been expressed, they were always received with attention, and they were well known to Her Majesty, but he must dissent from one statement, which was, that the Government had declared that this country had no interest in Siamese affairs.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he had not said that; what he said, and still said, was that Her Majesty's Government declared

that when the quarrel arose between France and Siam on the banks of the Mekong that England had no immediate interest in that quarrel.

SIR E. GREY said, that if he remembered aright he did not think anything more was said than this, that England had no immediate interest in certain incidents of that quarrel. But another statement was made last year, to the effect that the Government considered this country had considerable interest in the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Siam, and, of course, those two statements must be taken together. With regard to the production of Papers, he had explained about 10 days ago that the Government were delaying because they thought it desirable that a final settlement of the points at issue between France and Siam should be arrived at before Papers were presented. He understood that now there only remained one point outstanding and still unsettled. That point was the question of the trial of a Siamese official accused of the murder of a French officer. One stage of the trial had resulted in the acquittal of the official. They were not quite certain, but what they heard rather went to show it was probable that there would be further proceedings. He hoped and expected, however, that the final result of this trial would not be long delayed. It was thought desirable still to refrain for a time from publishing Papers, in the hope that a satisfactory settlement of this outstanding point would be arrived at shortly.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

[Mr. MELLOR in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (ESTIMATES), 1894-5.

CLASS 1.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £28,614, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1895, for Expenditure in respect of Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain."

Sir R. Temple

MR. BARTLEY said, he should like to ask for an explanation of the reduction of £2,000 in the item of new works, alterations, and additions in connection with the British Museum, and for a statement from the Government as to the truth or otherwise of the rumour that it was proposed to add four or five acres to the site occupied by the Museum.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) was understood to complain of the inconvenience which had been caused by the conversion of certain rooms in the Museum.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, there were several additions to the British Museum buildings, such as new wings, still incomplete, which must, no doubt, imperil the safety of the edifice. But notwithstanding that there was a diminution in the Vote for buildings, one would have thought the object of the authorities would be to complete the buildings as soon as possible. He would like to know why the buildings were left in an incomplete state, and when they would be completed?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said that, as he had stated upon the Vote on Account, it was quite true that the Government proposed to purchase a considerable property from the Duke of Bedford. The amount would be borrowed and spread over a number of years, so that the payment would not form a very serious item of increase upon the ordinary Vote for the British Museum. Extensions of the building would probably be made from time to time, but at present there was no immediate intention of adding to the edifice. A Bill would have to be introduced into the House for the purpose of carrying out the transfer of the new plot of ground, and that would be the time to have the whole matter discussed. One or two matters were somewhat pressing upon the authorities, and among those was the question of removing some rather dangerous boilers from the lower portions of the building. Those would be removed on the first opportunity.

MR. HANBURY thought an excellent opportunity now existed for adding to the collection of Syrian sculpture in the British Museum by the purchase, at a very small cost, of samples of Syrian art and archæology, which were lying exposed to

the sun and weather in the neighbourhood of Nineveh and along the head of the Tigris. He had had the opportunity of visiting Nineveh, and had been much struck by these priceless archæological treasures, with their inscriptions, which furnished the key to Syrian history, lying neglected and unprotected. The Pasha of the district has expressed his readiness to sell them for a very moderate sum indeed, and the cost of transport would be small. There ought to be some Member of the Government to whom they could appeal, and who would take a special interest in matters of this kind.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that his responsibility was concerned with the fabric and with any structural alterations which might be decided upon. He would not therefore follow the last speaker's remarks, though no doubt the Trustees of the Museum were fully alive to the subject. He was not personally responsible for framing the Estimates, but, as far as he was aware, no demand by the Trustees of the Museum for money for necessary alterations had been refused by the Government. He did not think there were any unfinished building work at the Museum.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, there were scaffolding up outside portions of the building.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, he was not aware of any new work. Though the inquiry of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) rightly referred to a subsequent Vote, he would say that it was not part of the duty of the First Commissioner of Works to interfere with the discretion of the Trustees in such a matter.

MR. TOMLINSON said, the Committee were asked to vote money for alterations in the Museum buildings, and he thought it was the duty of the Minister in charge to give some reasons for carrying out these changes. He believed the proposed change in the rooms for gold ornaments and medals would not tend to the security or safety of the gold ornaments, and that was why he urged this matter on the attention of the First Commissioner.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, he did not think the matter came within his Department. He understood that the

change in the rooms had been sanctioned either last year or two years ago; but had not yet been completed. The Trustees considered the re-arrangement of the rooms desirable, and so far as he was concerned his responsibility lay entirely in any structural alterations of the building.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, he was sure the Committee did not wish to press the right hon. Gentleman as to matters of detail connected with the Department which they were all so glad to see him presiding over; but some protest should be made against the doctrine laid down by the right hon. Gentleman that the Trustees of the British Museum were the authority to which in these matters Parliament should bow. The Government were responsible to Parliament for the expenditure of this money, and Parliament was entitled to an explanation with regard to it from the Government.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that all he had stated, or meant to convey, was that the matter did not come under the jurisdiction of his Department, which was interested only in questions affecting the Museum buildings.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT explained that all applications by the Trustees of the British Museum were first considered by the Treasury—which had full control—and approved of before being laid before Parliament.

MR. BARTLEY said, the First Commissioner had stated he was not aware that there had been any refusal on the part of his Department of anything the Trustees of the Museum wanted in the way of building. As he had spent a good deal of his life connected with one of the Public Departments, he could say that the Departments were always most anxious to obtain money for their purposes, and he was sure that this money would not have been given up by the Trustees of the Museum unless great pressure had been brought to bear on them by the Treasury to reduce their demand for money for repairs and new buildings to the lowest possible amount, especially as they were in want of additional accommodation for their treasures.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he could give a satisfactory answer to the hon. Gentleman. The £1,000 had been spent last year on the basement for the

Assyrian sculpture, and, as that work had been completed, it was not necessary to ask for any more money for the purpose. The Trustees also knowing that the Government had in prospect this large scheme for obtaining additional land around the Museum, involving an expenditure of £200,000, thought it wise to hold their hands for a time before they asked for money for further extensions, for they would under this scheme be able to extend their buildings in a more satisfactory way.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, he had learned that the scaffoldings referred to by the hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston were put up for the ordinary external repairs, and had nothing to do with any unfinished new work.

MR. A. C. MORTON thought that enough money had now been spent on Assyrian bulls. If the Government had any other bulls in view—such as Irish bulls—the House might consider whether it ought not to vote more money for their purchase.

MR. TOMLINSON said, the matter he had called attention to referred to alterations in structure, and was therefore relevant to the present Vote. He objected on principle to being referred to the next Vote, and when that Vote came up and he asked for particulars of the re-arrangement of the rooms to be told that he was not in Order, as the Vote for structures had been disposed of.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said, that outside the very high railing in front of the British Museum there was a small railing, breast high, enclosing five or six feet of the footpath. The small railing had probably been put up about 30 years ago to keep off boys from climbing up the main railing, but as the latter was now sufficiently intimidating, and as there were policemen about night and day, the small railing might be removed and five or six feet added to the footpath, which was all too narrow for the crowds of people who visited the Museum on holidays.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: I will look into that matter.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked for some information regarding the item of £950 to provide additional space in the copyright department. Was it con-

nected with any new development, or expected development, of the Copyright Law? That law was not in a satisfactory position at present; it would certainly have to be attended to in a short time, and unless there was some completed plan with regard to the Law of Copyright, he doubted the wisdom of this large expenditure.

MR. HANBURY said, he did not know why there should be an annual charge of £1,000 for furniture for the British Museum. It was not an institution where one would have thought there was a constant demand for fresh furniture; and if this sum were spent yearly the Museum must be crowded with old furniture, for there was never any mention of an appropriation in aid by the sale of old furniture. He would like to know what became of the old furniture.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he was glad to see a Vote of £3,850 for Bethnal Green Museum. Instead of spending all the money on the West End of London, where those who called themselves the aristocracy lived, some of it should be devoted to the East End or the South West. He should like some explanation of the item of £3,500 for rent of Galleries at South Kensington, and why it was required to spend £4,500 on temporary buildings in that Museum. There was also an item of £860 for rent of galleries, in the Imperial Institute which showed an increase of £110 over the Vote of last year. He objected to the Vote last year because it looked like a subsidy to the Imperial Institute, which was, generally speaking, regarded as a sham and a farce, in which no one took any interest except a few adventurers and company promoters.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS asked the right hon. Gentleman to state to the Committee how far the completion of the South Kensington Museum building was being proceeded with. To their present unsightly condition as seen from the public road it would be difficult to find a parallel in this or any other country. He had been unable to find that any progress had been made in that direction.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that it was hoped a beginning would be made with the new buildings at South Kensington next year. There were obvious reasons for not going on with them this

year. By the completion of a number of new and heavy works in the course of the present year a sum of £60,000 would be set free, so to speak, without substantially adding to the Votes for Public Buildings next year. In the meantime, a sum of £4,500 was asked for this year to provide temporary accommodation for the South Kensington staff. Hon. Members would agree that the Department was acting wisely in equalising the expenditure year by year, and money would be saved in the long run by the erection of temporary buildings.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked whether plans had been adopted for the new buildings?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, plans had been approved.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said, it was desirable the plans should be exhibited.

MR. BARTLEY, speaking from considerable experience of expenditure on the South Kensington buildings, objected to an expenditure of £4,500 on temporary buildings which would have to be pulled down to make room for the permanent structure. There were several acres of land at South Kensington merely covered with grass, and which might be built upon, and common-sense would surely dictate that this money should be expended in making a commencement with the permanent buildings there, leaving the boilers alone. It seemed most extravagant to employ the money as proposed upon a building in which the staff were to be placed temporarily while the pulling down was going on. A block of buildings might be put up at the south-west corner, where at least a couple of acres of land were available, and the "Boilers" would, of course, ultimately have to come down.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, the plan contemplated building over a considerable area, part of which was not at present occupied at all. Undoubtedly some provision must be made for the accommodation of the staff. He had understood that the new buildings erected on the vacant site would be utilised for that purpose, and the £4,500 should be employed in that way rather than in the erection of temporary buildings which would have soon to be removed as absolutely worthless. The Committee ought really to be further informed as to the progress of the build-

ings and the expenditure of the money voted for them.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS suggested that the Government should take this opportunity of making known to the House of Commons generally what plans had been approved for these buildings. He, at any rate, had not seen them. That was the more desirable, as the right hon. Gentleman had told them he was going to ask Parliament for a Vote for these buildings next year. Surely they should know what the buildings were to be like. Another important consideration was that they should not be built of unsuitable materials for the atmosphere of London, as had occurred in other instances where white stone and red brick, both easily spoiled and defiled, had been used. Terra cotta would much more successfully resist the ill-effects of our London atmosphere.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE stated that the plans were approved by the late Government. He would be glad to arrange for the plans being exhibited in the tea-room. As to the charge for furniture for the British Museum, he was informed that certain things had to be supplied in the nature of fittings for certain official residences, but the larger part of the money was expended in cases and necessary furniture for the Museum. With regard to the rent paid to the Imperial Institute, an arrangement had been made that, for the gallery occupied by the Department, it should pay annually 3 per cent. on the cost of that part of the building.

MR. A. C. MORTON objected to the Department occupying any part of the Imperial Institute, and to public money being paid to an Institute which did no good whatever, and was got up to provide salaries for adventurers. He was afraid this was a subsidy to the Imperial Institute, which was shoved into the Estimates for the first time by the late Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. A. C. MORTON was only pointing out that these arrangements were a sham and were merely a fraud upon the public. Why was it necessary to give public money to the Imperial Institute?

*SIR J. GOLDSMID said, it struck him that, instead of pulling down the "Boilers"

and erecting temporary buildings at a cost of £4,500, it would be better to commence permanent buildings at once; and, if necessary, to house the staff temporarily in the permanent buildings. That would be far more economical than to put up temporary buildings at a considerable cost. And there was always a danger of their being maintained when once erected, however little that might have been at first intended. He remembered a good many years ago some temporary buildings being put up, and Parliament, as so much money had been spent upon them, ultimately made them permanent, so that they remained an eyesore to this day. The expenditure of large sums upon temporary buildings was very bad in principle. No doubt the Vice President wanted his staff to be properly housed somewhere or other, but that was no reason why these buildings should be pulled down and temporary ones erected, when a commencement might be made on the permanent structure elsewhere. The right hon. Gentleman would have to offer a better explanation if he would satisfy him and a good many other Members of the House.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, it was only after the most careful consideration the conclusion had been come to that the wiser course was to build accommodation for the staff on the site of the "Boilers," which at present were in themselves a source of considerable danger, although that was not the principal reason for removing them. There was not the slightest wish to expend large sums on temporary buildings, which he agreed would be great waste. This was the most convenient place for locating the staff. He would be very unwilling to authorise temporary buildings unless it was absolutely necessary to do so.

MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University) said, it was certainly desirable that those hideous things called the "Boilers" should be removed, but he would ask whether they were to understand that the erection of temporary buildings was to serve as an excuse for postponing the commencement of permanent buildings, in order that another year might elapse before the House pledged itself to the larger expenditure. They had spent money on good plans which had been exhibited and approved; and he should like an assurance that the works were

really going to be taken in hand and carried through. The only way to ensure something being done was to get the opinion of the House of Commons upon the matter. Of course, the Treasury was naturally anxious, as always, to postpone the incurring of considerable expenditure. He had had that struggle many a time, and could assure his right hon. Friend he also would have to undergo it. He wanted an undertaking that the Office of Works would not put off the House of Commons with this small expenditure, but that they would obtain the consent of the Treasury at the earliest possible moment to the principal scheme being carried out.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, he had already, in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman, stated that next year the Treasury would present an Estimate for the commencement of the new buildings. It was not possible to do it this year on account of the large expenditure for other works, which would be completed within the year. The Public Buildings Vote showed an increase of £20,000 for works which would be completed within the year; and to that extent the Department would be set free for next year. The right hon. Gentleman would recognise that the Department could not commence the whole of the buildings at once.

MR. BARTLEY said, the explanations given were so unsatisfactory that he should conclude by moving the reduction of this item. There was no doubt the Government could spend this £4,500 in erecting permanent buildings in which the staff could be temporarily housed, and thus obviate the necessity for erecting temporary buildings. The rough estimate of the whole expenditure to be incurred was about £500,000; and that showed the size of the site that had to be covered. It did seem a most extraordinary way to set about this work to begin by erecting temporary buildings. The "Boilers," as they were called, were only to be temporary buildings when they were erected in 1857; and if temporary buildings were put up now they would probably remain as long as the "Boilers" had done. The assurances that had been given might be given in good faith, but they were not worth very much, because, before next year, another set of officials might

reign at the Treasury who might have different views on the matter. The whole system upon which the extension was being carried out was very unsatisfactory. He objected to the hiring of these spaces on the other side of the road. The country was paying many hundreds a year for the rental of these buildings outside, when there was as a fact plenty of space otherwise. It seemed to him that the whole system was in a state of chaos. The present proposal was to put up temporary sheds, which would be as ugly as the old "Boilers." He said that the time had come when they ought to stop this haphazard expenditure. They ought to have proper plans submitted to them, and those plans ought to be carried out. In the interest of the taxpayers and of the South Kensington Museum itself, he should move a reduction of this sum of £4,500, so that they might really test the feeling of the Committee upon the matter.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Item J, for Science and Art Department Buildings, be reduced by £4,500, in respect of Temporary Buildings at South Kensington."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

*SIR J. GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) said, that the report which reached him was that the "Boilers" were used for an entirely different purpose from the one pointed out by the Vice President of the Council. They were used now and then for the purpose of examining plans which were sent up from the country, and were not occupied by the permanent staff. The permanent staff were housed near the Oratory. He wanted to know whether it was not possible to economise by beginning to build at the other end, near the buildings where the permanent staff was now accommodated, leaving the "Boilers" to be dealt with last, when their temporary occupation could be made permanent. It struck him that, instead of pulling down the "Boilers" in order to erect temporary buildings at a cost of £4,500, it would be far better to commence permanent buildings at once in which the staff could be housed.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said, there seemed to be some misapprehension with regard to this Vote. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down thought that the "Boilers" were a series of iron sheds, and he believed

that they were not used for the purposes of the staff, but were depositories for the examination of plans. Whether they were used for plans or for offices, the "Boilers" occupied the site that the Government ought to start upon at once for the finishing of the buildings. [An hon. MEMBER: No!] Well, he knew South Kensington just as well as the hon. Gentleman who cried "no." They had at least to complain that the appearance of one of the most beautiful buildings in London—he meant the Brompton Oratory—was spoiled by the unfinished state of the South Kensington buildings; and, consequently, he said that they ought to start with the completion of the frontage of those buildings as near to the Oratory as possible. When they found that that was the point at which some of the staff were situated it seemed to him that the First Commissioner of Works had made out a strong case for getting rid of the "Boilers" and completing the front of the Museum. The hon. Member for Kensington said that the staff could be accommodated by starting a new building at the other end of the premises. He thought that by the time the "Boilers" were pulled down, and the temporary building erected, they would find that there was no necessity for completing the new block at the south-west corner of the Museum, because by that time public opinion in London would protest against the Imperial Institute being used for its present purposes, and would demand that it should be handed over to the South Kensington Authorities, and be devoted to mechanical engineering, instead of being devoted to the uses of "Diplomatic Johnnies and Colonial Bounders." It was his opinion that they ought to have the staff housed in a portion of the building in close proximity to the Oratory, and that they ought to have these dangerous "Boilers" pulled down at once. Although he was opposed to the general system of temporary buildings of any kind whatever, he thought that, under the circumstances of the case, the Government were entitled to ask for a sum of money to complete the front of the Museum, so as to place it in harmony with the beautiful buildings both right and left.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that this proposal for the erection of temporary buildings was not a new one.

Mr. John Burns

It was decided upon by the late Government two years ago. He was not more desirous than the hon. Gentleman opposite to see temporary buildings erected. The immediate necessity, however, was the provision of a building for the staff. The staff was very insufficiently provided for at present, and it was absolutely necessary that the first extension made should be devoted to their purpose. The hon. Member for Islington said it would be a wise course to erect a portion of the building and to put the staff in it, and then to remove it again. The effect of that would be that they would have to erect in another portion of the ground a building for the staff, which would afterwards have to be used for exhibition purposes. As it was obvious that no building could be equally suitable for both purposes, he could only say that that course did not commend itself to his mind, and that he did not think it would commend itself to the Committee, if they had the plans before them. The course now recommended to the Committee seemed to him to be the wisest one that could be followed, and indeed the only one that could be adopted.

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton) said, he understood the right hon. Gentleman had agreed to exhibit these plans afresh in the tea-room. He was not aware himself that the opinion of hon. Members had been invited upon the plans. The impression left upon his mind was that the style of architecture adopted was neither classical nor Gothic, nor Renaissance, nor English domestic architecture. It was totally a new school. There was, undoubtedly, great merit in originality, but he should be glad to know whether there was any chance of the plans being reconsidered.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he should not go into the various styles of the architecture of the building, but should address himself to the sole question whether they were going to spend £4,500 on a temporary building or upon a permanent building. The hon. Member for Battersea had argued that they should erect a temporary building because a permanent building would never be required, inasmuch as he intended to turn the Imperial Institute into a school of mechanical engineering. He had said that they

had these buildings called "Boilers." In these "Boilers" was housed the staff of South Kensington Museum. They had also acres of ground vacant, upon which at some time they were going to erect a permanent building. How were they going to erect this permanent building? They might begin by erecting a part of the permanent building on the vacant ground. But the hon. Gentleman said that, first of all, they must pull down the "Boilers," and then erect the temporary building. He presumed that what was meant was that the temporary building was to be erected first, and then the clerks and staff were to be transferred, and that afterwards a permanent building was to be erected, and at some future time the staff and clerks were to be transferred from their second temporary home into their permanent home. It seemed to be plain that the whole of the money proposed to be devoted to this building would be absolutely thrown away. Let them take the £4,500 and begin upon the vacant ground with the permanent buildings. It would be as good, at any rate, as any temporary building that could be erected, and useful as well for other purposes. They would then save the £4,500, instead of putting it into a building which must hereafter be taken down, and they would be putting an end to the system of temporary buildings, an arrangement which was a disgrace to South Kensington, and had made the building ridiculous in the eyes of the artistic world.

*SIR J. GOLDSMID said, he should like to know where it was intended to erect these temporary buildings? He was inclined to think that the staff who were said to be now occupying the "Boilers" might prefer to remain in their present quarters rather than be removed a long way away from their work. He was glad to see that the Vice President had come back to the House, because they would be pleased to know how he was going to arrange for the housing of the staff who were temporarily accommodated in the "Boilers." They had heard that a good portion of the permanent staff occupied the "Boilers," but he understood that it was only a portion of the staff which was sent into the "Boilers" in order to examine the plans which came up from the country, and that they were not occupied by the

regular permanent staff. It was necessary that they should have some explanation as to how this matter stood, and as to what was really intended to be done.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) said, that the present accommodation was absolutely unsuitable for the staff. Hon. Members seemed to think that providing proper accommodation for the staff was a very immaterial matter. If, however, they would take the trouble to go down one day and inspect the "Boilers" they would find some well-known and distinguished men like Mr. Morris and Mr. Crane located there. He thought that was a disreputable place for them to be in. They were just as much members of the permanent staff as any others. He understood that the building was to be on the other side of the Exhibition Road. A very important part of their work was carried on on the other side of the Exhibition Road, but as a fact it did not really matter on which side the buildings were placed.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that nobody had addressed himself to the practical question involved in the Amendment. Why could not the Government commence by erecting permanent buildings on the vacant ground? Why could they not commence their expenditure upon that portion of the ground which was now vacant, and house the staff in the buildings so erected, thereby saving this expenditure of £4,500?

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he was glad the Government had promised to exhibit these plans again in the tea-room. He must say he had been a pretty regular attendant at the House, but he had never seen these plans. Possibly they were put in the tea-room during the time of the General Election. As he understood, they were not bound to these plans although a tender had been accepted. It appeared to him that the answer of the Government was not a very good one as to the erection of temporary buildings. He did not suppose that they wanted to waste the money of the taxpayers, which could be very much better expended in other parts of London. The Museum ought not to be made a lounge for the aristocracy. It was not clear to his mind that it was necessary to spend this money on temporary buildings. He thought it could be spent upon new

buildings, and so saved. It was all very well to say that the matter had been well considered, but they were not bound by the official mind. He found that what the officials wanted was money, and they knew that a great deal of it was wasted. He hoped the Government would consider whether this money could not be saved by spending it upon a part of the permanent buildings instead of upon a temporary building. They might put it upon what side they liked, but let them put it where it would be permanent. As at present contemplated the money would be wasted.

MR. TOMLINSON said, that whatever might be the merits of the question he did not think that they could be satisfied by the explanation of the Vice President. The right hon. Gentleman wanted to get the staff out of their temporary accommodation in the "Boilers," and yet he proposed to put up another temporary building for their accommodation. It would be a great deal better that a permanent building should be constructed; and in the interests of economy, and the carrying out of public works for the public advantage, he thought that the Committee ought to express its view against this proposal.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that the only desire of the Government was to carry out the work as economically as possible. By the pulling down of the "Boilers" the staff would be displaced, and up to the present time it had not been found possible to find accommodation for the staff in any other way than that suggested. If they could find temporary accommodation in the neighbourhood they would endeavour to obtain the sanction of the Treasury to alter the proposal so that the staff could be placed in any accommodation so found.

MR. BARTLEY said, the Committee now heard that although the Government were asking for £4,500 for temporary buildings, that between this and the erection of the building they would, if they found it convenient, go to the Treasury for power to expend the money in a direction different to the verdict expressed by Parliament. Their argument was that they ought to begin the permanent buildings. What the Vice President had told him was that

the "Boilers" were used for looking at the national competition drawings. If there was a place that could be used with advantage for the purposes suggested he should say that it would be one of the new courts of the Museum. Nothing could be better than that one of these new courts should take the place of the present "Boilers." The hon. Member for Battersea had said that he wanted to beautify the space between the Museum and the Oratory. There was ample room at the bottom of the building next to the Oratory to put up a new block quite as large as the "Boilers" themselves. The "Boilers" were not next to the Oratory. There was no question whatever that if the Government thought proper to do it they could set to work and put up one section of the new building which would do perfectly well for all the purposes required.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that the plans had been accepted, and that alterations, though possible, would involve a severe fine. Some provision must be made at once, otherwise it would not be possible to house the staff.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 25; Noes 82.—(Division List, No. 9.)

Original Question again proposed.

SIR R. TEMPLE called attention to the next item, £2,800 odd, for the purchase of property adjacent to the Bethnal Green Museum. Would the right hon. Gentleman tell the Committee something about it—what that property was, what purpose it was to serve, and to what extent the Museum would be benefited by it?

*MR. H. GLADSTONE explained that the expenditure was to acquire a small amount of property which projected into the open space at present existing, and which was a source of danger from fire.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked for an explanation of an item of £860 paid to the Imperial Institute. He said, he objected to any form of subsidising out of public money the Institute, which he regarded as a fraud on the nation altogether. Public money had been obtained and buildings promised, but the money had been spent elsewhere. He asked whether any agreement had been

made in this matter, and if so what it was?

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, the sum was a terminable payment for rent of rooms in the Institute, space being wanted at South Kensington.

MR. JOHN BURNS called attention to an item of £3,850 for the purchase of houses adjacent to the Bethnal Green Museum in order to pull them down. He stated that the London County Council had recently acquired seven or eight acres of ground near the Museum for an open space, and suggested that the First Commissioner of Works should confer with the architect of the County Council with a view to the work being carried out as a whole in a symmetrical way.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE undertook to do this.

SIR R. TEMPLE asked what had been done to improve the accommodation for the Art students at South Kensington when they assembled there for examination. What had been done with the land required for the examination buildings? He believed some plan had been proposed for some fine new buildings, but was not aware what progress had been made with it.

MR. H. GLADSTONE said, his right hon. Friend the late First Commissioner had made the best arrangements he could for the present to improve the accommodation without spending too large a sum upon that particular item.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £21,161, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1895, for Expenditure in respect of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, and for the maintenance of certain Cemeteries Abroad."

COLONEL TOMLINSON (Preston) could understand charges for proper repairs, but not that the charges should extend to providing furniture, in a building account.

MR. HANBURY asked for an explanation with reference to the contribution of India towards the rents of Legation and Consular buildings in China.

MR. A. C. MORTON referred to the charge for municipal and State taxes, including insurance at Berlin, and asked whether this country was to be asked to continue the payment of those taxes, when Great Britain made an exemption in favour of other Powers? He also objected to the poor people of India being called upon to make contributions which the British authorities ought to pay out of Imperial funds. The China rents also included a sum of £490 for taxes, which seemed very large, and satisfactory information should be given about these contributions towards the China rents.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE was understood to say that there was a certain amount of reciprocity observed with regard to the payment of rates and taxes, and that the payment by India towards rents of Legation and Consular buildings in China had been made for many years.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that it would be only fair that notice should be given to the Embassies that the Local Authorities of London would charge them rates and taxes, and that we should insist upon reciprocity in this matter to the advantage of the ratepayers of various parishes as the case might be.

MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) asked whether it was not the universal practice in all foreign countries to exempt Diplomatic and Consular Representatives from the payment of rates and taxes, and why the rule was not observed in Berlin and Vienna?

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) was bound to say that he did not think that India contributed too large a share towards the Diplomatic and Consular Services of this country when they considered the enormous advantage which she derived from them. No doubt the time had come when there might be some reconsideration and revision as to the particular cases in which she should contribute. But he thought that the result of any such revision would be to increase and not to diminish the extent of the Indian contribution, and that it would not be a good thing for India if the matter were re-considered. For instance, the expenditure in Eastern Africa, partly colonial and partly foreign, was almost entirely incurred on behalf of Indian subjects and Indian trade. Both the Indian subjects and the Indian

trade had an enormous interest in the East Coast of Africa. The whole matter was very thoroughly considered in the famous investigation into the finances of India which took place upon the suggestion of Mr. Fawcett some years ago, and there was no case made out for India ceasing to pay towards the Diplomatic and Consular Services. There was another matter which arose upon this Vote under several different items. It would be improper to discuss a question of policy upon a Vote which was simply a Vote for buildings. At the same time, there were certain matters in the Vote in regard to which this was the only opportunity for discussion, and if they were not mentioned upon this Vote, they could not be mentioned at all. There were items of expenditure on behalf of British Central Africa and Zanzibar, some of which did not arise upon any other Vote; and in this connection it was desirable to take notice of how far the Foreign Office was becoming a Colonial Department. He held that the proper policy of this country was to place protectorates, which were virtually colonies, under the control of the Colonial, and not the Foreign, Department. With regard to Central Africa, there was no other opportunity of making mention of the fact, that British Central Africa was practically a portion of the British Empire—

*SIR E. GREY said, there would be opportunity for further mention of this matter.

SIR C. W. DILKE said, that although he might have an opportunity of mentioning Central Africa again, there were other items in the Vote which he could not mention. All he could say was, to take the case of Africa, that there were now in Africa a large number of establishments for which they were paying in this Vote in regard to places which were paying their running expenses out of the revenue they received; and there was no Budget presented by these colonies, as they virtually were. The proper thing was to place these colonies under the Colonial, and not under the Foreign, Office. He would not, however, discuss the matter further now, as he should be able to refer to it on Class V.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that before they entered upon this large field which

Sir C. W. Dilke

the right hon. Baronet had opened out to them, they should clear up the question of the position which diplomatic residences in this country occupied in regard to local rates. The right hon. Baronet, who had a practical knowledge of the Foreign Office, said that the houses occupied by the Foreign Representatives were exempt from rates. If that were carried out strictly it would be unjust to localities from the local taxation point of view. He was under the impression that the Imperial funds made up to the localities for the sacrifice to which they were subjected in the Imperial interest. That was so, he thought. [An hon. MEMBER: No.] If, for instance, a house in a parish in London where a diplomatic residence was situated, for Imperial reasons was purchased for diplomatic purposes, it became extra-territorial. Certainly the Imperial Exchequer ought to come to the rescue of the parish in cases of that kind. He thought that in the cases of diplomatic residences there should be exemption from rates. But before they entered upon any larger topic, he would like to call attention to the item for the accommodation of our Residences in China. Now, India was largely benefited by our diplomatic expenditure in China, and he thought that it should devolve on the Revenues of India to make us some recompense. He did not champion the British Empire against the British taxpayer. It was considered to be patriotic to say that the British taxpayer ought to do everything, and to be very generous with his money, and that he ought to contribute towards all sorts of Imperial expenditure. He was glad to find that India did contribute something towards the expenses of these Services, but he thought they ought to know exactly what the proportion was. He was not saying that India ought to contribute anything at all, but inasmuch as there was a contribution, he should like to know what the details were.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, he should like to state what was the position of the case in regard to houses occupied by the Representatives of Foreign Powers. It was not the case that all the Representatives had their houses exempted from local rates. Formerly these houses were liable for rates, but the Foreign Representatives were not liable to be proceeded

against for non-payment of rates. That question was brought up upon complaints made by the Local Authorities to the Government in 1891, and complaints were also made by the Diplomatic Body as to the trouble to which they were put in this matter. The Treasury at that time made a proposal to the Diplomatic Body and to the Foreign Office, which was accepted by all parties. The proposal was that local rates for the relief of the poor, School Board, police, baths, and washhouses, public libraries, and Burial Board were to be borne by Her Majesty's Government; and that the local rates for sewerage, drainage, maintenance lighting and improvement of streets, and fire-brigade were to be borne by the Diplomatic Body. This arrangement was only operative in cases where our Representatives in foreign countries received the same treatment. There was to be a system of reciprocity; and he had a list of 19 or 20 countries which adopted the system. The plan now adopted was that the Government paid both classes of rates in the first instance, and obtained repayment through the Foreign Office of that portion for which the Diplomatic Body was responsible. The plan worked most satisfactorily.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked whether the German Government came under this arrangement?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, that Germany already had a long pull at the British purse, and he wished to be sure that they had no more.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he must ask for an explanation of some of the figures of the Estimate. From an accountant's point of view the particulars given were not intelligible. Was the original amount £1,490, from which £490 was deducted for the Indian contribution, or was it that the gross sum was £1,000, to which India contributed £490. The specifications said under Subhead E (China Rents) that the amount was for "Rents of the Legation and Consular Buildings in China, in respect of which the Indian Government contributes, including £490 for taxes." What was the total amount of the contribution of India?

MR. HANBURY said, it was all very well for the Member for the Forest of Dean to say that if this matter were reconsidered India might have to pay a

larger amount than she was paying at this moment. Four Ministers were interested in the Vote, and yet they were unable to get any answer to their questions. He thought they ought to know exactly what the Indian contribution was, and except he got an answer showing that Ministers knew what the contribution was, he should move a reduction. He begged, in order to get an answer from the Government, to move to reduce Sub-head E by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Item E., for China Rents, be reduced by £100, in respect of Rents for Legation and Consular Buildings in China."—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

MR. TOMLINSON said, he noticed that in regard to the expenses for Legation and Consular Buildings in India the Vote was smaller this year than last year. He suggested, therefore, that a larger contribution was being made by India. That was quite consistent with such information as had been furnished to them. It seemed to him strange that there should be a reduction of the rent of the Consular Buildings from £1,270 to £1,000.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he did not know whether the Estimates were intended to be read according to the ordinary construction of the English grammar. He did not know whether it was to be supposed that the contribution of the Indian Government was £1,000. He was rather shocked to observe that the Minister for India was not in his place. The right hon. Gentleman would no doubt be able to tell them what was the amount that India did contribute. He, as the guardian of the Indian purse, would no doubt know whether India was or was not contributing a fair share of these rents. The definite question to which they wanted an answer was the amount contributed by the Government of India.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that he was not possessed of full information on this point, and he could not answer for all the details of a Vote for the preparation of which he was not responsible.

SIR C. W. DILKE said, that the contribution from India was £12,500.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) said, the right hon. Baronet

had correctly stated the contribution of India to be £12,500. He had no objection to hon. Members raising the question as to whether that contribution was too much, but he might say that those who took the deepest interest in Indian finance were content with the arrangement under which that contribution was paid, and were not desirous that the matter should be re-considered.

MR. HANBURY said, that he must consider the question from the British taxpayers' point of view. Justice ought to be done between the two countries, and if India ought to pay more why should she not pay more? He wanted to know what the particular contribution of India was to these China rents. He must insist upon the reduction which he had moved.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, it was very clear that there was a lump sum of £12,500, on account of the Consular and Diplomatic Services, paid by the Government of India, and whether that sum was paid for buildings or for salaries did not seem to him to matter. What did it signify whether it was paid under one particular item or another? The taxpayers benefited to that extent.

MR. TOMLINSON said, that it made this difference, that they did not know what the cost of the Services was. They knew that they were contributing £1,000, and they knew that India was contributing something out of the £12,500, but they did not know what it was. He thought the Estimate ought to be made up in such a way that they would know what was being contributed. They were entitled to some explanation as to how this £12,500 was divided.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER said, the hon. Member opposite was an experienced man of business, and he knew that the usual way of settling contributions either between one Corporation or another, or between one part of the Empire or another, was to ascertain what was the gross sum to be paid by the contributing party in regard to the whole service rendered. It was not practicable to divide and apportion the money in the detailed manner suggested. Competent authorities representing the British Authorities on one hand and the Indian Authorities on the other agreed that the sum of £12,500

was a fair amount for India to pay, and for England to receive. The Government took this Service as a whole, and said India derived great advantages from it, and that it was fair that she should pay £12,500 a year towards this part of the Diplomatic and Consular Service of Great Britain. If the hon. Member wished to re-open the question, he believed there was a Motion on the Paper complaining that India paid too much. To ask how the money was divided was to ask a question which could not possibly be answered.

MR. TOMLINSON asked whether the £1,000 was the whole of the cost of the communication with China?

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that up to a few years ago one-third of the sub-head they were now considering was charged on the Indian Government. A change was made, and the sum included in the £12,500 now contributed by India in respect to the Consular Service.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner (Mr. H. Gladstone) has performed what the Secretary of State (Mr. H. H. Fowler) described as an impossible task. He has told us that the contribution of India was not fixed at the sum of £12,500 as a matter of arrangement between the United Kingdom and its great Dependency, but was made up by calculating the fair share of each of the items concerned. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that the Indian contribution was estimated at one-third. The Secretary for India has just told us, from his official knowledge I presume, that in the interests of the Indian taxpayer he would recommend that this matter should not be further pursued.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: No, I did not say that. I did not express any opinion of my own on the question. What I did was to communicate to the House the opinion of the India Office.

MR. J. LOWTHER: Well, that is better still. The right hon. Gentleman gave us not his views, but the views of his official advisers, who are those most competent to form an opinion upon the subject. In the opinion of the experts who advise the right hon. Gentleman India pays too little. That, of course, is a subject which, when it comes up for the consideration of the House, will have to be discussed. The question

is whether this is a reasonable and fair arrangement.

MR. BARTLEY said, he had no doubt it seemed a little hard that the Secretary for India should be expected to understand these points, and perhaps a little hard that the new First Commissioner of Works should have to understand them, but the Committee really had a right to expect that the Government which had been in Office for a year and a half should present their Estimate in an intelligible manner.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE: It has been in the same form for the six years preceding.

MR. BARTLEY said, he did not think that it was in exactly the same form this year as it had been before. It was impossible to understand the words as they stood. They did not constitute an English sentence, and they meant absolutely nothing.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: I understand that for many years past no notice has been bestowed upon this matter. I quite admit that the Estimate might be worded more clearly, and I will see that this shall be done in another year.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the point was that the Committee was asked to vote £1,000, although, as a matter of fact, £1,000 was not needed. The amount needed was £1,000, to be reduced by some sum not named, and of the amount of which no Minister was cognisant except the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. H. Gladstone), who had made a shot of £300. It was very important that the Committee should know exactly what they were voting. Hon. Members had been entirely unable to elicit the slightest information either as to finance or as to grammar from Her Majesty's Government.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 16; Noes 92.—(Division List, No. 10.)

Original Question again proposed.

*MR. STUART-WORTLEY: I see that all through these various European capitals in the case of repairs the architect always has a fee of £24; but when we come to Washington the fee is £50. I do not know whether this increase is due to the blessings of a Republican

Government or to exigencies of Federal currency, but perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will explain that on the Report stage.

MR. BARTLEY asked whether the new Agency House at Cairo was completed. He wished to know what the item for maintaining the Agency grounds and gardens meant. He knew that there was a very nice garden round the Agency House, having seen it when he was recently in Cairo, and he wished to know whether the Ambassador was to pay half the cost and the State the other half?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he noticed on page 28 the item of "Prisons." This involved a claim to go into certain countries and put the subjects of those countries into prison. He was aware that under what were called the Capitulations we undoubtedly had the power in Turkey of putting Turkish subjects into prison under certain circumstances.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the question of the Capitulations can be dealt with under this Vote.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, his point was that the items for prisons was unnecessary. There was a sum of £450 put down for Consular Offices, Prisons, and Post Offices. He wished to know how much of the £450 was applicable for the prisons. If the question could be raised on any other Vote he would willingly defer it, but his contention was that no prison should be maintained by the Sovereign of this country in another country in derogation of the power of the other Sovereign. The maintenance of a prison in Constantinople was, in his opinion, very unjustifiable.

*SIR E. GREY: I cannot state the exact sum which is spent upon prisons, but I gather from the speech of the hon. Member that his object is to object to the whole sum which is spent upon prisons, because he disapproves of extra-territorial jurisdiction. Well, Sir, that raises a very grave question of policy connected with the Capitulations in Turkey. If we were to renounce our rights under the Capitulations it would mean that British subjects residing in Turkey, or being in Turkey for any length of time, would become subject to the Turkish law, and could be placed in Turkish prisons. That is a course of policy which Her Majesty's Government have no intention of embark-

ing upon. The present system has existed for a very long time, and the Government have no intention of renouncing their rights under the Capitulations. I do not think it would be a wise step to take, and I am surprised that the question should be raised by the hon. Gentleman, as it would mean the sacrifice of British interests.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, under those circumstances he should be obliged to move the reduction of the Vote by the whole sum of £450. He said boldly that if a British subject went into Turkey he should become subject to Turkish law, just as British subjects who went into Russia, or even into the Argentine Republic, became subject to the laws of those countries.

SIR E. GREY : I look upon this as a matter, not only of policy, but of very large policy indeed, and I should have thought that a more suitable occasion to discuss it would have arisen either on the Foreign Office Vote or else on the Vote for the Under Secretary's salary.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : That being so, I will not press the matter now.

*MR. H. GLADSTONE said, that the Agency House at Cairo was absolutely finished. The contribution to the Agency garden was on account of the special cost of water in Egypt.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

SPORT REGULATION BILL.—(No. 101.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."
—(Mr. A. C. Morton.)

MR. J. LOWTHER : This Bill seems to me to be as grotesque an example of attempted grandmotherly legislation as was ever submitted to Parliament. The hon. Gentleman who introduced it has been so good as to supply us with a Memorandum which states its aims and objects. Of course, it is easy enough to say that any particular sport is open to objection. No doubt, every sport taken in detail would be open to some objection, and I have no doubt that there may be

persons who would be glad to put down all sport. Here is the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. A. C. Morton) who singles out many sports, some of which are more especially the sports of the people of this country. In the Northern and Midland Counties rabbit coursing prevails very largely. I confess that it is not a sport of which I have any personal knowledge, but those who take part in it have not the means of engaging in the more expensive forms of sport. They cannot have hunters or keep fox-hounds, or indulge in any other of the more expensive amusements.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday next.

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 89.)

Read a second time, and committed.

MAGISTRATES' QUALIFICATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Dodd, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Qualification and Appointment of Justices of the Peace in Counties, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Dodd, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Arch, Mr. Channing, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Carvell Williams, and Mr. Neville.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 128.]

CORPORATE ASSOCIATIONS (PROPERTY) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Howell, Bill for the better securing their Property to Corporate Associations, and for preventing the Alienation of their Funds, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Howell, Mr. Barrow, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Benn, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Frye, Mr. Montagu, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Rowlands, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. Stewart Wallace.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 129.]

VALUATION (METROPOLIS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Pickersgill, Bill for better securing uniformity in the valuation and assessment of rateable property in the Administrative County of London; to establish a tribunal to deal with assessment appeals; and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Cohen, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Howell, and Captain Norton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 130.]

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [29th March] reported, and agreed to.—[See p. 963.]

House adjourned at five minutes after
Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

Sir E. Grey

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 2nd April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

MILITARY INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING RIOTS IN INDIA.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if the India Office has yet received a copy of the recent Instructions issued by the Government of India, ordering that in future the police in dealing with a riot shall not use blank cartridge but use only ball cartridge; if so, has this Order received the sanction of the Secretary of State; and will he lay the Instruction and any correspondence thereon upon the Table of the House?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): No definite Instructions have yet been given on this subject. The question is under the consideration of the Local Governments, by whom the Orders will have to be issued eventually, and the precise line to be taken will not be determined until the Government of India is in possession of their views. When the Correspondence is complete there will be no objection to its being presented to the House.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACT.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he is now able to lay upon the Table of the House some information, in the shape of a Return or otherwise, showing the composition of the recently elected Legislative Assemblies throughout British India, and the method pursued by the various Governors and Lieutenant Governors in carrying out the provisions of the Indian Councils Act?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: A Return showing the composition of the several Legislative Councils has been received from India, and the Papers showing the method pursued by the various Local Governments are being collected. If my hon. Friend will move for the Papers I shall have great pleasure in presenting them to the House.

CHARGE AGAINST A HINDU DEPUTY COLLECTOR.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India is he aware that a Hindu deputy collector of Malabar, Mr. C. Kunhi Kannan was, on the *ex parte* Report of the acting District Magistrate, prosecuted by the Madras Government for alleged bribery in October, 1888, without being given any opportunity of explanation; and whether sworn evidence has been forthcoming, since the prosecution was ended, proving that the prosecution was the result of a conspiracy, and that the Madras Government has refused to order an inquiry; and, if so, will the Secretary of State call for copies of Petitions, dated 19th May and 21st December, 1893, with a view to considering the advisability of directing the Madras Government to hold an inquiry into the case?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Mr. C. Kunhi Kannan was prosecuted before a Court of Law to which he had the opportunity of submitting such explanation or defence of his conduct as he might have to offer. The result of the trial was, however, that he was convicted of bribery, and sentenced to imprisonment. Since his release he has petitioned the Government of Madras for a further inquiry, alleging that his conviction was the result of a conspiracy; but, as the trial had taken place in the ordinary way before the Sessions Court, the Government of Madras pointed out that his proper course was to apply to the Sessions Court for sanction to prosecute his accuser for perjury, or to move the High Court to take up the matter in exercise of its powers of revision, and that an investigation by a special officer would, by comparison, carry no weight, and would have no legal authority. In this view I am disposed, as at present advised, to concur.

THE BALLADHUN MURDER CASE.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if the full Report of the Balladhun murder case as tried before the Sessions Judge, Mr. John Clark, at Silchar, 29th September, 1893, and the full Report of the appeal against the verdict, heard before Justices Prinsep and Amir Ali, who delivered judgment 11th November, 1893, has now been received by the

India Office; and, if so, will he lay them upon the Table; whether Mr. Clark is still in the service of the Government of India; and, if so, in what capacity; and, if so, will he order his suspension, pending a searching public inquiry into the grave charges against him? At the same time, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that it was stated, during the hearing of the appeal against the conviction and sentence of certain prisoners to death and penal servitude by Mr. John Clark, Sessions Judge of Cachar, 11th November, 1893, in the High Court at Calcutta, that Police Inspector Joy Chunder was sent down from Sylhet by the Assam Government to obtain evidence, with a promised reward of Rs.2,500 if he obtained a conviction; and that, on arrival at Balladhun, the place where the murder was committed, Inspector Joy Chunder arrested a large number of people indiscriminately, regardless of sex, and by prolonged imprisonment, torture, and threats, worked up a case based upon tutored approvers' evidence; if it is true that the village of Balladhun, and others in the neighbourhood, were placed under punitive police supervision; is Inspector Joy Chunder still in the employ of the Government of India; and has any action been taken to bring him to trial for the outrages charged against him?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I am aware that allegations have been made with respect to the proceedings in connection with the Balladhun murder case which require the fullest investigation. The Viceroy has instructed the Chief Commissioner of Assam to inquire into all the circumstances. I understand that the Chief Commissioner of Assam will shortly make his Report, and I believe that the Papers on the subject should reach me about the middle of next month. At present no official Papers relating to the case have been received in the India Office, and I am unable to give any further answer with respect to the details of this case.

MR. CAINE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I put this question two and a-half months ago, and that I was then promised that an inquiry should be made? Is it the case that nothing official has yet been done?

Mr. Caine

MR. H. H. FOWLER: My hon. Friend did, no doubt, put the question, and the result was that the Viceroy was communicated with, and he directed an inquiry. Until that has been completed no Papers can be given.

ILLEGAL TRAWLING IN THE MORAY FIRTH.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, with reference to the alleged illegal trawling in the Moray Firth on Sunday, the 4th of March, whether he is aware that numerous witnesses at Portknockie are prepared to testify that the vessels in question were engaged the whole forenoon, from 8 o'clock to 12, working under steam within a radius of four miles, doubling, crossing, and re-crossing in such a manner as to show that they were trawling; whether any official visit of inquiry from H.M.S. *Jackal*, or from any other quarter, has been made to Portknockie with reference to this case; upon what evidence the Commander of the *Jackal* considered that the vessels in question were probably steam liners and vessels in passage; and how many days since last September the *Jackal* has spent off the coast of Banffshire?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I am informed that it is the case that certain persons at Portknockie are prepared to testify that vessels were seen as stated in the hon. Member's question. But as the hon. Member is aware, unless offending vessels can be identified, nothing further can be done, and no evidence of identification has been laid before the Fishery Board. No official visit of inquiry has been made by the Fishery Board, as the information received from the Commander of the *Jackal*, the fishery officer at Buchie, and other sources did not point to inquiry serving any useful end. The view of the Commander of the *Jackal* was based upon his general knowledge of the local movements of steam liners and other vessels. The *Jackal* has been off Banffshire for 19 days since September last on watching duty, in addition to 14 days on scientific duty.

THE DEER FORESTS INQUIRY.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will explain why the labours of the Royal Commission on Highland Pasture and Deer Forests are confined to the six counties in which the Crofters Acts are at present in force; and whether, as the same conditions of agriculture obtain in Moray and Nairn as in these six counties, Her Majesty's Government will direct the Commission to extend its labours to these counties?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Royal Commission was appointed in order to obtain information with regard to those counties to which Parliament by the Act of 1886 applied the provisions relating to the enlargement of crofters' holdings. The Government are not prepared to extend the operation of the Commission beyond the bounds of those counties

SAMOA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state which of Her Majesty's ships is now at Samoa, and the date of her arrival there; and whether he can give the House any further information as to the deplorable events reported to have occurred there, and the course Her Majesty's Government intend to pursue?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): There is no British ship of war at Samoa at present. Her Majesty's Consul reports by telegraph on the 22nd ultimo that there has been some trouble in Samoa, but that the presence of a man-of-war is not at all necessary, as an armistice has been arranged and a satisfactory peace is certain.

THE RUSSO-GERMAN COMMERCIAL TREATY.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a copy of the Commercial Treaty, recently concluded between Russia and Germany, has been received at the Foreign Office; when the said Treaty will come into force; and whether, under the Most Favoured Nation Clause, what

British goods, if any, will be favourably affected?

*SIR E. GREY: The text of the Commercial Treaty recently concluded between Germany and Russia has been received at the Foreign Office, and is now in force. Its effect in regard to British goods is shown in a statement in *The Board of Trade Journal* published on the 15th of this month, page 291, to which I must ask the hon. Member to refer for details.

KIANG HUNG.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is a fact, as stated by Mr. Holt Hallett, that Her Majesty's Government are about to cede to China the Burmese district of Kiang Hung, through which the British railway to Yunnan and the South-Western Provinces of China must pass?

*SIR E. GREY: The cession of the rights of Burma in Kiang Hung, which we found under Chinese administration, is one of those questions dealt with in the Convention relating to the Burmese frontier recently signed with China. As that Convention has not yet been ratified it would not be in the interests of the Public Service to make any declaration with regard to it at the present moment.

RANGES FOR THE LEE-METFORD RIFLE.

SIR H. FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many ranges are now available for troops armed, and about to be armed, with the Lee-Metford rifle, and to specify the places in each military division in the United Kingdom; and what number of targets can be used at the said ranges?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): There are at present 48 ranges available for the troops armed, or about to be armed, with the Lee-Metford rifle. I have here a list of the places, if my hon. Friend wishes to see it.

MILITARY BILLETS AT WAKEFIELD

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the troops billeted or quartered at Wakefield during the late labour dis-

putes were paid for by the Government to the local innkeepers at a rate higher than the statutory payments made for billeting on the ground that it was a large and unusual burden upon such innkeepers ; and whether the same rule will be applied to Pontefract, where the innkeepers had a similar burden cast upon them ; and, if not, upon what ground a difference is made ?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The local Military Authorities paid the innkeepers at Wakefield in regard to troops billeted there at the highest rate allowed by the Army Act for more days than the Regulations are held to justify. This was a mistake, and it was discovered before payment at Pontefract was made.

THE INDIAN STAFF CORPS.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any Despatch has recently been received from the Indian Government relating to the complaints made as to the slow rate of promotion in the Indian Staff Corps ; and when it may be expected that Her Majesty's Government will arrive at a decision on this subject ?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER : A Despatch on the subject has been received by the Secretary of State, who is in communication with the War Office on the subject. I regret the delay ; but, in view of the importance and difficulty of the subject, it is not possible to state when a decision will be arrived at.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES AT LEIXLIP.

MR. KENNEDY (Kildare, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a resolution unanimously adopted by the Leixlip branch of the Irish Industrial League urging upon the Local Government Board for Ireland the necessity of having labourers' cottages speedily erected for the Leixlip district ; if he can state what steps have as yet been taken by the Local Government Board and the Board of Guardians to provide labourers' cottages for this district ; and whether, in view of the well-known unsanitary state of the present dwellings of the poor at Leixlip, he will direct the Local Government Board to hasten the

completion of a scheme to provide better accommodation ?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : I have received a copy of the resolution referred to. The Local Government Board are now preparing an Order for the erection of nine labourers' cottages in Leixlip, and will endeavour to expedite the building operations by every means within their power.

INCOME TAX COMMISSIONERS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the number of Income Tax Commissioners who are traders, bankers, or bank directors in their respective localities ?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (SIR J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : No information is available on this point. The Income Tax Commissioners are appointed by the Land Tax Commissioners (who are themselves appointed by Parliament), and are not bound to furnish any information except their names and addresses.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : Can a Return be obtained ?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : I see no means of obtaining such a Return.

DERELICTS IN THE ATLANTIC.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he has had his attention directed to the Atlantic Pilot Chart, dated February, 1894, in which are marked the places of 22 derelicts, which, when last seen, were drifting in the track of vessels between the coasts of the United Kingdom and the chief ports of the United States ; whether one of them, the schooner *Fannie G. Woolston*, which appears in the chart a little to the north of Cuba, has had her drift marked since October, 1891 ; and whether, in concert with the Government of the United States, anything can be done to remove such dangers to the navigation of the Atlantic ?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : The Board of Admiralty have been in communication with the Board of Trade on the subject

of floating derelicts, and it has been decided to appoint a small Departmental Committee to consider and report on the Memorials which have been received and the correspondence which has taken place on this subject. Pending the Report of that Committee questions like those of my hon. Friend, which are covered by this larger inquiry, will probably not be pressed.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Will the right hon. Baronet also take into consideration the recommendations of the Maritime Conference which sat at Washington in 1889 on this subject?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I have no doubt the Committee will take the whole subject thoroughly into consideration, and, therefore, they can scarcely overlook those recommendations.

CHRISTMAS PAY IN THE MANCHESTER POST OFFICE.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General will he explain why the town postmen of Manchester are only paid for work on Christmas Day at the ordinary day rate, whereas by legislative enactment Christmas Day is to be observed as a Sunday, and therefore they ought to be paid at rate and a quarter, at which rate other *employés* of the Manchester Post Office working indoors on Christmas Day are paid; will he explain why the town postmen themselves, who work indoors for some eight or nine hours (and only two and a half or three hours outside) under inspection of an officer, do not come under the higher rate paid without difficulty to the said inside *employés*; whether he will inquire into this grievance and cause it to be remedied; and will he inquire whether several of the hours worked on Christmas Day should be considered night duty?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I am not aware that Christmas Day is by legislative enactment to be observed as Sunday. Postmen employed in the delivery and collection of letters receive at Manchester, as elsewhere, an extra day's wages on Christmas Day for all work performed, including the preparation of the letters for delivery, which must, of course, be done indoors, before

they start upon their delivery; and it is not proposed to alter this rate of payment. The principle under which the indoor staff of the Post Office are paid a rate and a quarter or the overtime rate for work done on Sundays and Christmas day has never been applied to the staff employed on outdoor duties, who are not paid for overtime.

MR. SCHWANN asked if the men did not, as a rule, consider it a greater hardship to be kept at work on Christmas Days than on Sundays?

[No answer was given.]

STRANORLAR AND GLENTIES RAILWAY.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the time originally fixed for the completion of the Stranorlar and Glenties Railway, County Donegal, has been overpassed by about two years; whether the extension of time granted by the Irish Privy Council is now nearly expired, and that the works are still in a very backward condition; whether the county surveyor has recently reported that the Glenties extension is making very slow progress, and the time of completion is very uncertain; whether he is aware that the people of the district which would be served by this line of railway have frequently complained of the dilatory conduct of the contractors for those works; whether, under those circumstances, he will take steps to cause those contractors to make more rapid progress with works intended by Parliament for the benefit of an impoverished district, and for which public money has been voted; and whether the Government intend to require that the line shall be completed at any particular time; and, if so, will he be so good as to name the time?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The statement in Paragraph 1 is correct, but the time originally fixed by Order in Council was not fixed with any prospect of the line being finished within the time. Though the progress of the line has not been rapid, I understand that the works are not, on the whole, in a very backward condition, and one of the chief causes of the delay has been the difficulties met with by the contractors in getting possession of the land. The

Board of Works have never relaxed their efforts to expedite the construction of the line, but no doubt some small extension of time will have to be applied for. It is not, however, for me to say what the decision of the Irish Privy Council may be when the application is formally made.

GERMAN PRISON-MADE GOODS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the Report of a Commissioner despatched to Germany by *The Hardwareman*, and published in the issue of that journal of 3rd March, to inquire into prison work and the exportation to England of prison-made hardware, hosiery, brushes, lithographic and other printing, whips, joinery, and other articles, many stamped as "perfection," "reliable," and other British words, with a view of misleading the English purchaser; and if Her Majesty's Government will cause immediate steps to be taken to put a stop to such competition with British workmen and workwomen, having regard to the successful protests made by Trade Unions and other Industrial Organisations against the competition of prison labour at home?

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, North-west): Before the question is answered I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, if the words "with a view of misleading the English purchaser" are in Order?

*MR. SPEAKER : I cannot see with what object the words are used, unless it is to mislead.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : Yes, Sir; since the hon. and gallant Member put down his Question I have seen the statements referred to. There is no power to prevent the importation of such goods unless they contravene the provisions of the Merchandise Marks Act, and on this point I am making further inquiry. They might be exported to the United States without being subjected to this risk.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : Will the Government use their influence with the German Government to secure that these goods shall be marked as prison made?

*MR. MUNDELLA : I do not think we could get the Germans to do it; I

doubt whether we do it in our own prisons. We import carpets from India; some are made in prison and some are not; it is impossible to discriminate between them.

THE UNDERMANNING OF BRITISH SHIPS.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has considered the decision given at the Board of Trade inquiry, held at Glasgow on the 27th March, in regard to the wreck of the *Port Yarrock*, by which the whole crew of 21 persons were drowned; whether he is aware the Court held that the vessel was neither properly nor efficiently manned, and that the disaster was contributed to by the vessel being short-handed; and if it is his intention to obtain authority to compel British vessels leaving the United Kingdom to carry competent and sufficient crews?

*MR. MUNDELLA : My attention has been called to the case to which my hon. Friend refers, and the circumstances under which so regrettable a loss of life occurred are receiving careful consideration with a view, if possible, to further proceedings in the matter. The fact is, that at the present moment the case is before the Law Officers of Scotland to ascertain whether, under Clause 4 of the Act, we can take proceedings. I fully recognise the importance of British merchant ships being manned with competent and sufficient crews, and I am taking advice as to the best means of securing the seaworthiness of merchant vessels in so material a particular. As the hon. Member behind me (Mr. H. J. Wilson) has been informed by you, Mr. Speaker, that he cannot bring on the case of the vessel named, I will add that this question of undermanning has already received the attention of the Board of Trade, and we intend to pursue it still further. Up to the present time the Merchant Shipping Act does not allow of a ship being stopped in port on account of its deficient equipment in men; there is not a single precedent for a ship being so stopped. We intend that a thorough and explanative inquiry shall be made by a Committee, including ship-owners, representatives of seamen, and experts of the Board of Trade.

MR. PROVAND: Will the Committee include Members of this House?

MR. MUNDELLA: It is premature to say how the Committee will be constituted, but I suppose there will be Members from both sides upon it.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): Was not the subject of the loss of life at sea inquired into by a Royal Commission 10 years ago; did not that Commission report on the subject of undermanning, and has the Board of Trade ever taken action on that Report?

MR. MUNDELLA: There were Commissions in 1888 and in 1876. One Commission reported that undermanning was a source of danger, and a second did not touch the question at all. In 1884, in answer to a question in the House, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham said that more harm would be done by fixing a minimum scale than by leaving the question open, because the general effect might be that the average equipment would be reduced. Everything that is possible will now be done to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster as that mentioned in the question.

MR. H. J. WILSON (Middlesbrough): Would it not be possible to have an inquiry into the abilities of the seamen shipped as well as the number of them?

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Is it to be understood that the port officer of the Board of Trade has no power to prevent a vessel that is undermanned proceeding to sea?

MR. MUNDELLA: There is no such power unless it is a passenger vessel. There is no standard scale laid down for the manning of a ship unless it is a passenger ship. With regard to the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, I cannot give a promise until the time comes for the constitution of the Committee; but, so far as I am able, I will see that all desires as to the scope of the inquiry are satisfied.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: How many wrecks and casualties were reported last year from undermanning?

MR. MUNDELLA: There were five such losses reported, but all losses from undermanning would not be reported as a rule. In the case named the loss was obvious because it occurred in the bay off Brandon, but if it had happened in

the open sea the Board of Trade would have heard nothing about it.

MR. H. J. WILSON: I had intended to move the adjournment of the House on the question of the undermanning of ships, but, owing to the satisfactory answer that has been given me by the President of the Board of Trade, I do not intend to proceed with it.

RETIREMENT REGULATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

MR. R. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any, and what, steps have been taken by the Lord Chancellor of England, the Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and the Lord Chancellor in Ireland, in the Departments of the Public Service under their control, to carry out the spirit of Clause 10 of the Order in Council of the 15th of August, 1890, as to the compulsory retirement of officials above the age assigned in that Order as the period of superannuation?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: A Bill will be at once introduced giving the necessary powers, as regards England, to the Lord Chancellor and the Treasury. It has been thought desirable to defer legislation affecting Scotland and Ireland until the Bill in question has become law, as the conditions are somewhat different in the three countries.

LONDON BAKERIES.

MR. BARROW (Southwark, Bermondsey): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of Dr. Waldo on the deplorable conditions under which a large proportion of the bakery business is being carried on in London; and whether the Local Authorities are impotent under the present law to enforce sanitary remedies; and, if so, will further legislation be introduced at the earliest possible opportunity to effect the object?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I have communicated with the authorities on the subject, and will, as soon as I get an answer, inform my hon. Friend of the result.

LONDON BUILDING BYE-LAWS.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a Private Bill of the London County Council to consolidate and amend the enactments relating to streets and buildings in London; whether he is aware that the Bill proposes to deal with and to repeal certain Public Acts relating to the Metropolis, such as the Metropolitan Building Acts and the Metropolis Management Acts, many of the enactments in those Acts being repealed by the Schedule to the Bill; and whether, in view of the wide extent and far-reaching consequences of the Bill, the Government will consider the advisability of proposing to the House that it should be treated as a Public Bill?

SIR A. ROLLIT: Will the Bill in the ordinary course, like other Municipal Bills, go before the Police and Sanitary Committee?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot answer that without notice. With reference to the question on the Paper, the matters referred to should have been raised on the Second Reading. The matter is one over which the Home Office have no control.

MR. HOWELL: Have not these matters hitherto been administered under the Home Office? The Bill was read a second time on the Thursday before Good Friday, when no one seemed to know anything about the Bill. Everybody was taken by surprise. I ask the Speaker whether the Bill does not come within the purview of the ruling as to another Bill for the whole of London?

*MR. SPEAKER: Any point of Order should have been raised before the Second Reading, but I am advised that the promoters were perfectly within their rights in bringing the Bill in as a Private Bill. There is no reason why it should not be introduced as a Private Bill. If the Bill raises a question of public policy, that is a question which should have been raised at the proper time, but a question of Order does not now arise.

MR. HOWELL: Has the attention of the Home Office been called to the character of the Bill?

MR. ASQUITH: Yes, Sir.

MR. HOWELL: I suppose the only thing I can do now is to give notice that on the Third Reading I shall move the rejection of the Bill.

IRISH SLATES.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is proposed to carry out further building operations at the Curragh; and, if so, will a preference be given to tenders from Irish slate quarries, provided the quality is as good and the price as low as tenders from other parts of the United Kingdom?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The contracts made for the erection of buildings at the Curragh include the supply of materials; and I shall be very glad if the contractors are able to use Irish slates.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: May I ask whether the invitations for tenders contain any stipulation with regard to the use of Irish slates?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Not that I am aware of.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Can the right hon. Gentleman satisfy us by giving orders in that direction?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I believe it has been tried on previous occasions without success.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND MARRIAGE LAWS.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a case in the South Western Police Court, reported in *The Daily News*, 16th March, of a poor woman who complained to Mr. deRutzen that a clergyman refused to perform the ceremony of marriage between her daughter and her would-be husband because she was approaching her confinement, although the banns had been paid for; whether a clergyman of the Church of England can lawfully refuse to perform the ceremony of marriage between two persons, not otherwise incapacitated, upon the sole ground alleged; and whether, in view of the expense and delay involved in a prosecution for such refusal, he can take steps to prevent its recurrence in future? In putting the question the right hon. Gentleman said he understood

now that the clergyman had thought better of the matter and that the couple in question had been married by him, but he must press the matter, as it involved a question of law.

MR. ASQUITH: I have been in communication with the clergyman, who, it appears from what he tells me, thought it his duty, before pronouncing the blessing of the Marriage Service, to require some assurance of their sorrow for their past. He therefore suggested that they should be married at the Registry Office. Having received satisfactory evidence of their sorrow for their offence, the couple were married by him. With regard to the last two paragraphs, it appears to be a question of ecclesiastical discipline. I have no authority in the matter. I do not think a clergyman of the Church of England can lawfully refuse to marry a couple solely on the ground alleged. I do not see that any alteration of the law is rendered necessary by the occurrence.

ALLEGED BOYCOTTING AT KELLS.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the speeches made at Kells by hon. Members of this House on the 4th of February last, at a meeting held for the purpose of denouncing a gentleman resident in the district; whether the said meeting, having regard to its avowed object and the language used, was a legal assembly; whether any proceedings have been taken against any persons in respect of this meeting; whether he is aware that the gentleman referred to and denounced at the said meeting has been and is severely boycotted; and whether any steps have been taken to put an end to such boycotting?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention was drawn at the time to a report of the speeches delivered at this meeting. The notice convening the meeting, which I have examined, did not, as stated in the question, disclose or advocate any illegal object, the professed and avowed object being perfectly legal. It is true that in the course of the speeches made at the meeting references were made to the re-taking of evicted farms in the locality, and there can be very little doubt, I suppose, that the promoters of the meeting had specially in view the action of

the person referred to in the question in taking and holding this farm. As regards the effect of the speeches, however, they appear to be innocuous, and the police moreover were informed by the person who held, and still holds, the farm referred to that he did not care whether the meeting was held or not. The Government were advised by their legal advisers that there were not sufficient grounds for interfering with the meeting, and it was afterwards considered that proceedings with respect to the speeches made at the meeting would not be expedient. As the hon. and learned Member is aware, prosecutions, though sometimes justifiable, do more harm than good, and the present is just one of those cases. With regard to the effect of these speeches, I am informed that it is not correct to say that the man in question has been severely boycotted. It is true that several of his customers have withdrawn from his milling business; otherwise he has not suffered serious inconvenience. He buys and sells cattle at fairs without being in any way obstructed. The police are using, by my directions, the greatest possible vigilance to prevent any acts of intimidation, and so far they have been successful in their efforts.

MR. CARSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that within the last month two additional meetings have been held for the purpose of adopting methods to secure a more effectual boycotting of this gentleman, and has the right hon. Gentleman taken any steps to deal with them?

MR. J. MORLEY: I was aware that these meetings had been held. I have watched this case carefully, and my information has been all the way through that this man—of course, for obvious reasons, I will not mention his name—has not suffered any harm, and, indeed, apprehends none. The police hold a similar view. Of course, they will not relax their vigilance in the slightest degree.

MR. CARSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow these meetings to go on until this man's trade is ruined? We have already seen that his milling business has suffered.

MR. J. MORLEY: As soon as I find the effect of any meetings of this kind to be injurious to the man in his business or otherwise, I shall take such steps

as may be deemed necessary by the law advisers.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): Is the right hon. Gentleman advised by the Irish Law Officers that the facts are sufficient to warrant a prosecution for criminal conspiracy?

MR. J. MORLEY: No, Sir; I have not been advised to that effect. Some phrases have been used which might, no doubt, point to what is technically a conspiracy; but, taking the speeches as a whole, I have been advised that they are not such as to warrant a prosecution.

DOCKYARD PENSIONS.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Board of Admiralty will take into their favourable consideration the unanimous request of the hired men in the dockyards, that when they are placed upon the establishment the time they have served as hired men should be counted for pension?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (**MR. E. ROBERTSON**, Dundee) (who replied) said: The Regulations under which pensions are awarded in the dockyards are common to all the labour employed in the service of the Crown, and are based upon the Superannuation Act, and the Treasury Minutes issued thereunder. The hon. Member will therefore see that it is not in the power of the Admiralty to take independent action of the nature suggested in his question, although they have given careful consideration to the statements of the men.

WAR OFFICE MEDICAL DIVISION.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what are the duties performed at the Medical Division of the War Office by the officer designated the "Professional Assistant" to the Director General?

***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The Professional Assistant to the Director General of the Army Medical Department is his deputy in all matters, acting for him in his absence and assisting him generally when present. He is

Mr. J. Morley

likewise the permanent President of the Medical Board at headquarters.

THE NOTTINGHAM EXECUTION.

MR. BALLANTINE (Coventry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any medical inquiry was held at Nottingham Gaol into the mental condition of Walter Smith after his condemnation for murder?

MR. ASQUITH: At the trial there was no allegation that this prisoner was suffering from insanity, and not a particle of evidence to that effect was put forward by his counsel. On the contrary, it was said he was a steady man, devoted to work. The first representation that he was mentally unsound was received by me the day before the execution in the form of a telegram from his uncle; but that gave no particulars, and there was never any Report or suggestion from the Medical Authorities of the gaol that the man was mentally unsound or that his mind was affected.

WALES AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint, &c.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board how soon he expects the translation and publication in the Welsh language of the Local Government Act to be completed?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (**MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE**, Bradford, Central): I am arranging for a translation into the Welsh language being made of the Local Government Act of last Session, but I cannot at present state when the translation will be completed.

CIVIL SERVICE RULES.

MR. W. KENNY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury from what date the new Treasury Rule (referred to at page 12, House of Commons Paper, No. 515), under which members of the Civil Service are not allowed additional years on abolition of office, takes effect; and whether the Rule applies to existing members of the Civil Service at the date when it came into force?

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: This Rule has been in operation since August, 1889, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated to the House that addition of

years for abolition of office should only be granted in exceptional cases. The Rule applies to all Civil servants then serving or subsequently appointed.

SOLDIERS' INSTITUTES IN DUBLIN.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is in contemplation to start a second Soldiers' Institute in Dublin under the patronage of Lord Wolseley ; whether any of the Catholic clergy are to be upon its Board of Management ; and whether any, and what, religious services are to be held in it ?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : Nothing is known in the War Office of this proposed Institute, but I intend to make inquiries into the subject.

LETTERKENNY DISTRICT ASYLUM.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is in contemplation to spend a large sum, and, if so, how much, on the District Lunatic Asylum at Letterkenny ; how much is to be expended on the residence of the Medical Superintendent ; what will be thereafter the total annual charge upon the rate-payers of the district in respect of the asylum ; and whether the Local Government Board have given their sanction to the details of the scheme ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : An expenditure of £26,100 has been authorised by the Privy Council on works at the Letterkenny District Lunatic Asylum to provide against overcrowding, and for other urgent and necessitous wants of the Institution. This amount includes a sum of £2,300 for a detached house for the Resident Medical Superintendent. The present residence of this officer is situated in the centre of the asylum, and occupies some of its most important space, and it has been considered desirable to utilise this portion of the building for asylum accommodation, and to erect a new residence for the Medical Superintendent. The sum of £26,100 will be repayable to the Treasury in 20 years with interest at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum ; but the Treasury may, under the provisions of the Public Works Loans Act of last Session, extend the time of repayment to a period not exceeding 50 years. The Board of Control,

who are the authority in this matter, and not the Local Government Board, have approved of the details of the scheme for the additions and improvements now being carried out.

ALLEGED "CORKAGE" AT TEMPERANCE HOTELS.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to the practice of certain so-called temperance hotels of admitting visitors with their own supply of alcohol, and charging corkage ; and whether this practice renders such hotels liable to the publican's licence ?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) : The answer to the question is in the negative.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE IRISH LAND ACTS.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) : Will the Chief Secretary for Ireland state when he proposes to move the appointment of the Select Committee on the working of the Irish Land Acts ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : I am quite ready to move the appointment of the Select Committee at any moment. There is no difficulty on this side of the House, but hon. Gentlemen opposite, I understand, wish to have a discussion on the nomination of the Committee. I am not without hopes, however, that I may so alter the form that the hon. Members opposite will assent to it without discussion. I hope to be in a position to make a further statement to-morrow.

THE BUDGET.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square) : May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can name a day for making the Budget Statement ?

Sir W. HARCOURT : I hope at present to be able to introduce it on the 16th of this month. I cannot, however, say definitely.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) : I see the Army (Annual) Bill is down in the Orders after Report of Supply. Is it intended to bring it on to-night ? I understand the opposition to the Second Reading was withdrawn on the understanding

that Committee should be taken at a reasonable hour before midnight?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I do not apprehend there is any chance of its being taken to-night.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

Thomas Shaw, esquire, for the Hawick District of Burghs.

Harold John Tennant, esquire, for the County of Berwick.

Arthur Charles Humphreys Owen, esquire, for the County of Montgomery.

MOTIONS.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

MR. J. MORLEY, in asking for leave to bring in a Bill to authorise an advance out of the general fund of moneys belonging to suitors of the Supreme Court in Ireland for the purposes of the Library used by the Bar of Ireland at the Four Courts, Dublin, said : I think a few sentences from me will be sufficient to indicate the object of the Bill which I have now to ask the House to give me leave to bring in. It is to authorise an advance out of the Suitors' Fund of the Supreme Court in Ireland of a sufficient sum for the purpose of altering and improving the Library of the Four Courts in Dublin for the use of the Bar in Ireland. It is an object which everybody in Ireland desires to see fulfilled. It has been found that the present Library of the Four Courts is inadequate, both in ventilation and otherwise, and it is necessary to make arrangements for improving the Library. All the parties interested are agreed on this subject.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) : Would the right hon. Gentleman kindly say what sum it is proposed to advance?

MR. J. MORLEY : My hon. Friend will allow me to postpone stating the exact figure. The Bill will be printed in the course of to-morrow or next day, and there are some details to be settled with the Treasury. It is not a very large sum.

MR. GOSCHEN : Is it public money?

Mr. Hanbury

MR. J. MORLEY : It is from the Suitors' Fund, which is a fund derived from money paid in on account of actions and not disbursed.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to authorise an advance out of the general fund of moneys belonging to suitors of the Supreme Court in Ireland for the purposes of the Library used by the Bar of Ireland at the Four Courts, Dublin."—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 131.]

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND).

RESOLUTION.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) rose to move—

"That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed, under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee; that the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with 15 other Members, to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged; that Standing Orders No. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee."

He said : I beg to propose this Resolution the considerations in connection with which are so bound up with the daily experiences of hon. Members in the proceedings of this House and the effect of those proceedings upon the progress of Scotch legislation that I think a plain and brief statement of the requirements and facts upon which it is founded will best show what I believe to be the strength of the case which I propose to lay before the House. When one brings forward a proposal to this effect it is necessary to prove three things—first, that the existing state of things imperatively demands a remedy; secondly, that the remedy proposed will be efficacious, and that the dangers and difficulties which it brings with it do not approach in gravity to those which it removes; and, thirdly, that the informed public opinion of those who are most interested in the question is in favour of the change, or, at any

rate, in the same direction. If I can make good these propositions it only remains that the Government should be ready to go through with this change, and on that point I can assure the House that nothing will be wanting. We do not regard this as a partisan measure. We look upon it as a practical and business-like measure for getting more time for the Public Business of the House, and for doing justice to a great class of Members whose interests have had scant justice done them in the past. And we put it forward as a proposal for dealing with a state of things which must be dealt with decisively and at once. If anyone doubts that the present state of things must be altered, it is not the Scottish Members. They know how the business of their country has been left undone. They know the value of the time which is due to Scotland, and of which they get such a scanty share. I have often thought that the worst effect of the faulty custom of business to which men have become accustomed is that it lowers their standard from what is possible and what ought to be done; and I am quite certain that hon. Members who are not Scottish Members do not realise the plight in which Scottish Members are—not only are in this, but have been in all Parliaments. I am sure Scottish Members have been told in many a Session before this—and it is a very common thing to be told—“Oh, yes; you have no important Scottish Bill this Session; you had none last Session; but the Session before last you had such and such a Bill.” Now, is it not in itself an abuse of very great magnitude that 70 busy men, the Representatives of a certain country, should come to Parliament, and only every other year be able to do important business about the country which they represent? If that was the case in any other trade or calling than that of a Member of Parliament, we should say it was a state of things which absolutely required to be remedied. Whoever is satisfied with this state of things, it is not the Scottish Members. The Scottish Members have taken every opportunity which they could to testify their dissatisfaction. In this Parliament they have only had one such opportunity, and then the hon. Member for Caithness moved—

“That, in consequence of the pressure of Public Business and the failure of this House

to deal with Scottish affairs in accordance with the wishes of the Scottish people, it is desirable to devolve on a Scottish Legislature all matters exclusively relating to Scotland.”

Now, this expression of the grievance of Scotsmen is very strong; the remedy proposed is very strong; and Scottish Members voted in favour of that Resolution by two to one; whilst I believe that there were many who agreed with the preamble of that Resolution who only differed from the conclusion about Home Rule. If the Resolution had been plainly put to the House I believe that almost every Scotsman would have voted for it. But it may be said that this is a temporary feeling in this Parliament. What was the feeling of the Scottish Members in the last Parliament about Scottish business? That was a Parliament when there were fewer Members who belonged to that Party to which we on this side for the most part belong. It was a Parliament which was very heavily worked, but less overburdened than this Parliament; and Scottish opinion was that Scotsmen ought to manage their own business much more in their own fashion, and with a greater command of public time. In May, 1889, a Scottish Local Government Bill was read a second time, and it was moved that it should be sent to a Committee of the whole House. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds moved that, instead of sending it to a Committee of the whole House, it should be sent to a Select Committee composed of all the Scottish Representatives and of 30 other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection. Thirty-five Scottish Members voted for this Resolution and 15 against. In 1890 the Scottish Burghs Police Bill was referred to a Select Committee, and then my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, now Civil Lord of the Admiralty, moved that it should be referred to a Committee consisting of Members representing Scottish constituencies. On that occasion 31 Scottish Members voted for the Resolution and 13 against; and in the same Parliament the Resolution which I am now moving was moved very much in the same shape, and 30 Scottish Members to 16 voted in favour of it. The Scottish feeling, therefore, is permanent; it was the same in the last Parliament as it is in this

Parliament, only in those days the Ministry, for reasons which I do not criticise for a moment, invited the great majority of Members to go counter to the wishes of the Scottish Members. That is not the course we take to-night. We offer the Scottish Members a proposal for enabling them, at one of the most important periods of process in the manufacture of their Bills, to have those Bills moulded in accordance with Scottish opinion; and as far as we can influence and devise English, Welsh, and Irish Members, we shall ask them not to thwart the Scottish Members, but to assist them in obtaining what we know to be the wish and what we believe to be the interest of Scotland. If hon. Members for other parts of the country will look at this matter calmly they will see that it is in the interest of the whole House, and not of Scotland alone, that this proposal is brought forward. The Parish Councils Bill for Scotland, according to all the Rules which govern the sequence of business in this House, is a debt to Scotland which must be paid out of the general time of the House. The Scottish Parish Councils Bill raises as many important questions as the English Bill—questions as thoroughly understood by Scotland's Representatives, and exciting quite as great interest in Scotland as the English provisions did in England. The English Parish Councils Bill took 42 days of the time of the House in Committee. How long will the Scottish Parish Councils Bill take? I think it is not an exaggeration to say that 15 or 16 days are the very least that Scottish Members will have to demand from the general time of the House for the purpose of passing the Parish Councils Bill through Committee; and the Parish Councils Bill is only the first of a good many items and measures which are due to Scotland. Scotland has a very large population. It is a country very highly organised, and, therefore, dependent to a remarkable degree upon legislation for the free working of its administrative machinery and for its social and commercial progress. I do not think it is too much to say that not a week passes but some Scottish Local Body that thoroughly understands its business comes to the Scottish Office and asks that some statute passed in former years should be altered in an im-

portant particular, and saying that without this alteration the Statute will not work. The Burgh Police Act is one in which many alterations have been proposed. Then there are the private Members. This year the Scottish Members have not been very fortunate in the Ballot; and yet I already see on the Table of the House at least eight very important Scottish Bills, and I know that a good many more are in preparation. It requires almost endless patience and perseverance, and it requires almost humiliating appeals to the indulgence of English Members, to get one of those Bills occasionally passed between 12 and 1 o'clock in the morning. This proposal, therefore, to obtain time which is not taken from the general time of the House is a proposal for the advantage of Scotland indeed, but likewise greatly to the advantage of England and the rest of the Kingdom. I see that there are certain signs on the Order Book. One hon. Member, who agrees, I fancy, with this general proposal, thinks it does not go far enough. We are asking the House to take a new step, and therefore it is better and wiser to proceed on the old lines where they have been found efficient. We have followed carefully the old proposals with regard to Grand Committees. The number of Members proposed on this Grand Committee is almost the same; the quorum is the same; the Members who are not Scottish Members are to be selected by the same impartial body, and the Chairman is to be chosen by the same method from the experience, almost professional, of the Chairmen's Panel. In all respects the proposal is on the old model except in the business that is referred to the Committee and in the number of Members specially interested in the business, who are greatly increased in proportion. And, now, Sir, we place all the Scottish Members on this Committee. If you cannot put all the Members from Scotland on the Committee, I think you might as well leave it alone for a very obvious reason. If 30 or 40 Members were excluded, and if they know that business intimately connected with the country they represented was done in their absence, then the whole of the business would have to be done over again in the House, which would not be

the case if this proposal is adopted. I remember that we have often been told that the Grand Committee ought to be the microcosm of the House in Committee of the whole House. This is the great argument I advance for the Committee which we propose to set up. This Scotch Grand Committee will not only be a sort of microcosm of the House in Committee of the whole House on Scotch business; it will be the House in Committee on Scotch business itself. What is the House in Committee on Scotch business? Before that Committee has gone on 10 minutes all the Members except the Scotch Members have left the House. No one but a Scotch Member speaks; no one listens—[*Opposition laughter*—]but Scotch Members. But I am sorry to say that the Members who are in the precincts of the House come in to vote. Nothing is more striking—it is one of the best-known phenomena of Parliamentary life—the indifference which English Members show to the details of Scotch Debates. I do not care much for the amusement which I have caused amongst hon. Gentlemen opposite, for I am speaking now to Scotch Members, who know that what I am saying is the fact, and who have felt it long. This indifference of English Members is very remarkable; and if you read the London correspondents' writing in the English provincial papers, you will see that they seem to grudge the time given to a Scotch Debate on Scotch business. Anyone who will read the English newspapers the day after a Scotch Debate on a Scotch question will see that what I say is precisely true. But Scotland is quite unconcerned at this indifference of Englishmen, if only Scotchmen are to be allowed to do their business in their own manner and at their own time. In Committee of the whole House on Scotch business you have every possible disadvantage, and you have not the great advantage which the proposal before the House will give—that in this Scotch Grand Committee you will get the opinion of Scotland. This proposal will enable you at a most important stage in each Scotch Bill to get the real opinion of Scotland; and my belief is that, in 9 cases out of 10, or 19 cases out of 20, Parliament will be only too glad to know what Scotland thinks, and will endorse its ascertained opinion. I have

shown that the present state of things requires a remedy, and I have shown that this remedy, whatever else it will be, will be efficacious. I have shown also that the Scotch Members desire it. I will now refer to the question whether the evils and objections of this proposal outweigh the advantages. What are the dangers and disadvantages of this proposal? Are they dangers to the Empire or to the Kingdom at large? No Imperial question can possibly come on before this Scotch Committee. No question that can seriously affect any other part of the Kingdom directly can come before this Committee either. I shall soon introduce the Local Government Bill for Scotland, which will effect very large changes in all departments of Scotch life. I speak quite sincerely and honestly when I say that there is absolutely nothing in that Bill which can affect England, Ireland, or Wales, except as far as England, Wales, and Ireland are affected by the increased or diminished prosperity and content of Scotland. If anything is brought forward which touches other parts of the Kingdom the Chairman will rule it out of order, and if anything is brought forward which can injure the interests of other parts of the Kingdom there will be Members from other parts of the Kingdom to know what is being done in the Committee and to bring it before the attention of the House afterwards, and I venture to say that the House will take very sharp notice of it. But I believe the danger to be absolutely illusory. We are making a machinery which is to be worked by men of sense. And Scotch Members are men of sense. They know that this Scotch Grand Committee would not be worth a single Session's purchase if its Members used it to meddle with the affairs of other parts of the country. I suppose that the main argument which will be brought against this proposal will be the argument which was put forward—not at great length, but with great animation—by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, in the course of last month. There was one particular sentence in that speech to which I wish to refer, and the right hon. Gentleman will admit that it is the cardinal sentence. He said—

“It would be utterly unfair to English interests that, while the English were to have

no voice in the framing of Scotch measures, Scotchmen and Irishmen should determine the form in which English measures were to be passed."

But are the English to have no voice in the framing of Scotch measures? First of all, leave has to be obtained to introduce the Bill, and with a contentious measure that is a serious stage. Then the House as a whole must approve or reject the principle of the Bill on the Second Reading, and in full House Instructions will be moved on going into Committee. Afterwards the House will revise the work of the Committee on the Report stage, with the Speaker in the Chair, and consider the measure in its final shape on the Third Reading. Without the concurrence of the English majority, over and over again given, no Scotch measure can possibly become law; and we do not endeavour to get the concurrence of that majority by any Parliamentary device. But we expect to get a very favourable hearing from the majority of the House when they find out what the Scotch opinion is on Scotch measures, and we believe that the House will treat that opinion with great respect. England, therefore, will have a voice in Scotch business; and what is the extent to which Scotchmen will interfere with English business? By far the most of the measures which are discussed in Committee of the whole House are not English measures in the sense that they are measures peculiarly for England alone. Electorate Bills, trade Bills, agricultural Bills, Bills affecting the factory laws, India, the Colonies, the Army and the Navy—in all these Scotland has as much interest as England. That is one class of the Bills in which Scotchmen will have a voice. Then there are the English Bills which go to Grand Committees, and I venture to say that the number of these will be considerably increased, because when purely Scotch Bills are referred to this Scotch Grand Committee the time which Scotch business now takes before Grand Committees will be saved, and there will be more time for referring English Bills to the other Grand Committees. What are these Grand Committees? When English business comes before them they are almost completely English bodies. Even when Scotch business comes before a Grand Committee and 15 extra Scotch-

men are put on, the English Members still have a very large majority. Now, when a Scotch Bill comes before this Grand Committee which we propose there will be a very large majority of Scotch Members. The right hon. Gentleman asks us whether England is to have reciprocity. This seems to me to be exactly reciprocity. This seems to me to be fairness and justice, the proposal that a Grand Committee on Scotch business should be managed by a majority of Scotch Members, just as English business is managed by a majority of English Members. I quite admit that something still remains, and the benefit of that admission it will be cheaper to concede at once to the right hon. Gentleman. I admit that from time to time a Bill will come before the Committee of the whole House affecting England, Wales, or Ireland, on which Scotchmen will have a vote on the same day that they have been disposing of Scotch business with only a small infusion of English Members. So far that is an anomaly, but it is not sufficiently serious that for the sake of it you ought to defeat a scheme which I believe to be useful and workmanlike; and I am sure that anomaly will not be regarded as a sufficient answer to our proposals by that practical nation the method of conducting whose business we are now discussing. I thank the House for the patience with which I have been listened to, and I have now, in conclusion, a word to say on some non-contentious topics. It is the great advantage of this proposal that it promotes public work without doing an injury to any individual. I refer to the problem of the private Member, which always presents itself when we discuss the procedure of this House. This scheme makes no demand on the time of the private Member, but it gives a great value to that time which it does not now possess. What method have private Members of initiating business of their own in this House? They may bring forward a Motion on Tuesday or Friday, or they may introduce a Bill for Second Reading on a Wednesday. But what is the use of bringing forward Resolutions in favour of legislation and of ripening questions for legislation when there is no time to legislate? What is the use of getting Bills read a second time on a Wednesday when there is no public time

to pass them through Committee? But here you will have a special body to facilitate the transaction of special business which, I venture to say, in five years will have passed those private Scotch Bills best worth passing, and which, if a Scotch Member carried a Resolution in favour of legislation on a Tuesday or a Friday, will give the Government time to pass a Bill and carry that Resolution into law. Again, we do not push forward business by suppressing free speech. That is an argument which seems to be universally popular. Instead of cutting short the opportunities of speech we invite into the sphere of Debate many and many a man who now thinks he can best promote public business by his silence.

[*Laughter.*] I do not see anything to laugh at in that. There are many such Members in this House, and we hope to give them a field in which they can speak by giving them an audience they like, and an audience which likes nothing so much as substance, point, and brevity. The Committee of the whole House is very different from what it used to be in the old days. I remember very well the time when it was a most exceptional thing to make a peroration in Committee, but now perorations in Committee are the commonest things; and what is a more serious reflection is that, if you want to go back to the old Committee limit of 10 minutes for a speech, it is to the Grand Committees, and not to a Committee of the whole House, that you must go. My belief is that on this Scotch Grand Committee business will be done after the good old Scotch fashion, which is so well known in Scotch Town Councils, County Councils, Ecclesiastical Assemblies, and Conferences of Town and County Local Bodies.

[An hon. MEMBER: What is the Scotch fashion?] If the hon. Gentleman wants to know what the Scotch fashion of doing business is let him ask my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrewshire to lend him a copy of the proceedings of the Conference of County Councils, and there he will see in what a short time, with what practical argument, and with what large divisions the most important questions connected with the coming Scotch Local Government Bill were discussed and settled. This proposal is not made for the purpose of getting time for the advantage of the

Government. I refuse to separate the Government from the House on a question of the importance of passing legislation. The Government have no more interest than the rest of this House in carrying good legislation. I believe there are two motives that induce hon. Members to enter Parliament. One is the honourable ambition to take a personal part in the business of the nation, and the other is a desire to assist in passing measures into law. To hon. Members who are actuated by these motives—and I believe they are an enormous majority of this House—the proposal of the Government, if they carefully examine it, will, I think, be found acceptable. It is a proposal to give Members genuine work of a sort in which they are specially interested; work the object of which they see and the conduct of which they can hope to influence. It is a proposal, likewise, to enable good measures to be carried, which most Scotchmen—in some cases almost all Scotchmen—desire, but for which under the present system no time can be found, or will be found, I am afraid, for years to come. These are the two main recommendations of our proposals, and against them, in themselves, I do not think any man will find anything to say. Objections of principle—still more objections of precedent and custom—will be found, and will, no doubt, be eloquently and forcibly put forward against the proposal; but, none the less, the Government, with the knowledge of all that can be said against it, confidently recommend the proposal to the approbation of Scotland, to the sympathy of Members from other parts of the Kingdom, and to the judgment of the House of Commons.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order, No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by Order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order, No. 47, shall apply to the said Standing Committee.

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with 15 other Members, to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged.

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee."—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Mr. Speaker, in almost the closing words of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, he informed us that the Government were aware of everything that could be said against the proposal which he has laid before the House. I confess I never should have conjectured that from the speech to which we have listened. Nothing more amazed me in that speech, considering the occasion on which it is delivered, than the absolute ignorance, apparently, on the part of the right hon. Gentleman, that he and the Government of which he is a Member are endeavouring to make a change in our procedure which, I do not hesitate to say, would revolutionise the practice of this House. The right hon. Gentleman either knows, or does not know, of the Parliamentary arguments, the arguments drawn from Constitutional and Parliamentary practice, which may be urged against this proposal. If he does not know of them, what are we to think of a Government which allows itself to be represented by a Minister who, on an occasion of this sort, puts on one side all the really great issues on which we are called upon to decide, and occupies our time with a discussion, not unimportant in its proper place, of the precise opportunities which Scotch Members have of delighting each other with their own eloquence? What are we to think of him if he did not know of these arguments? But, if he did know of them—if he had them in his mind, and refused to touch upon them—what are we to think of the guidance given to the House on an important occasion like this by those who are responsible, after all, for laying before us the main considerations on which we ought to base our decision? Some of the arguments which the right hon. Gentleman used I do not think it worth while to touch upon. He told us, and I gathered from him—and apparently some hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite agreed with him—that he regarded the manner and character of Scotch speakers as of so admirable a kind—so far above the head of a mere English Member—that it would be grossly unfair to ask them to perform in an empty theatre, or to unsympathetic

auditors, and that they ought really to be collectively relegated to some large room near the grand staircase where there would be the perfection of performances and the most appreciative of audiences. Well, Sir, as a Scotchman, I protest against this. I love to speak to my countrymen, but I do not wish to be confined absolutely to them. I prefer to lay my views, such as they are, before larger and more mixed audiences. Though that is not an important argument, yet it is almost the most important argument which the right hon. Gentleman gave us, except only the argument of the neglect, or alleged neglect, of Scotch business. I have never concealed from the House that with regard to legislation for Scotland, and also for England and Ireland, the machinery of this House very often does not supply the means for passing measures as quickly as many of us desire. There are occasions on which this would be a very proper topic to bring before the House, but I venture to say it is not a proper topic or argument on which we are to be asked, for the first time, to introduce this principle of nationality into our Grand Committees—to construct those Committees and to frame them in a manner absolutely subversive, as I shall show directly, of the immemorial precedents set by this House in that matter. The right hon. Gentleman asks us what dangers to the Empire follow from his plan? I say I do not think that any dangers do follow to the Empire; but, after all, there are interests other than those commonly described as Imperial which are very much threatened by it, and interests which, in my judgment, really and truly in strictness deserve the full epithet of being as wide in their importance as those affecting the whole Empire over which Parliament is called upon to rule. For what is the issue? It is the constitution of Parliament itself. It is the constitution of the most important branch of the Legislature, and nothing of that kind can be put off, as we have been asked to do to-day by gentlemen who think that no argument ought to be touched upon in dealing with this question except that which concerns legislation affecting the northern portion of this island. What is the procedure of the Government? Having determined apparently to upset our immemorial traditions, they do so, not in a scheme

the whole bearings and results of which we can see and understand—not in a scheme which applies to England and Ireland as well as to Scotland, but in a scheme confined to one relatively small portion of the 35,000,000 of population over whom we directly rule. The enormous issues which are really at stake are deliberately concealed from us by the procedure the Government have adopted, and before I sit down I shall move an Amendment asking the House to refuse altogether to consider these piecemeal proposals, and to wait before finally approving or, as I hope, finally condemning any plan of this sort until we see it, in broad and unmistakable outlines, logically extended to every portion of the United Kingdom, and in all its bearings clear before us and the country. I have complained of many omissions made by the right hon. Gentleman in his speech, but I am glad he made one omission. He made no appeal to Scotch national sentiment. He told us a good deal about Scotch business, but of Scotch national sentiment he said nothing, and in this, I think, he acted well. I, Sir, am one of those who have always believed that these subordinate patriotisms, if I may use the expression, are a most useful element in our public life, and I should be the last person in this House to say one single word in disparagement of Scotch patriotism. But the right hon. Gentleman has shown clearly, by his own speech, that this is no question of Scotch patriotism or nationality. It is a question of carrying through rather more quickly, or rather more slowly, a certain amount of Scotch legislation. That is the only argument upon the one side, whereas on the other side there are arguments which I venture to lay before the House which ought to make it hesitate, not once or twice, but many times, before lending itself to any device of this description. I should like to know when the Party opposite were converted to this plan. I see before me one of the greatest independent authorities upon the business of this House, the hon. Member for Bedford City. A speech of his has just been put into my hands, delivered a few years ago—subsequent to the conversion to Home Rule of hon. Gentlemen opposite—in which this very proposal was discussed, and

the Member for Bedford, while advocating Grand Committees as a plan for aiding Scotch legislation, distinctly laid it down that if the proposal was that this Committee should consist of Scotch Members exclusively, or that on the Committee the Scotch Members should so preponderate in number as to overbear all other opinions, it was a bad and a dangerous proposal, and would only tend to accentuate the differences that might possibly exist between the two countries. These were words of sense, sobriety, and wisdom, and I quote them the more gladly because I think I gathered from the attitude taken by the hon. Gentleman this afternoon that he proposes to give us some further observations on the same topic to-night. I trust those observations will be in the same strain. Let us consider for one moment what this Committee is to be. It is to consist, to begin with, of all the Scotch Members, and the right hon. Gentleman quietly assumes that the mere fact of putting all the Scotch Members on the Committee is, by that process alone, an adequate method of representing Scotch opinion upon the details of local legislation. I deny that proposition altogether. I traverse it; I differ from it *in toto*. Why are Scotch Members elected by their various constituencies? Are they elected simply and solely because of their views on such legislation as is described in this Resolution—"Resolution solely relating to Scotland"? They are nothing of the kind; they are elected as part of the general system. They are elected in reference to an Imperial Parliament, in which Parties have a certain balance, and in which the various Parties have a certain policy. And if you were to grant Home Rule to Scotland to-morrow, as some gentlemen desire; if you were really to have in that country a separate Legislature—which Heaven forbid!—do you imagine for one moment that the representation in that separate Legislature would follow the lines adopted by the Scotch constituencies when they are sending Members to the Imperial Parliament? Clearly it would not. The most elementary student in Constitutional Government knows that it would not. When I am told Scotland thinks this or that, all I know is that gentlemen have been sent here to sup-

port one or other of the great Parties in the State, that Scotland may be taken to uphold these Parties in proportion as it sends Members to support one Party or the other. In that sense they represent Scotch opinion. But to tell me that they hold this or that opinion upon a sub-clause in a Parish Councils Bill, and therefore that is the voice of Scotland upon it, is to talk nonsense, and nonsense to which I absolutely decline to listen. The truth is, that upon a large number of these questions Scotch Members are no more experts—indeed, are not so great experts as a large number of English Members. What special qualification for dealing with the details of a County Council Bill applying practically solely to the rural districts has a gentleman who, so far as we know at all events, represents a strictly urban constituency, and that alone? Why, he has none. Again, what special qualification has a Member representing the Highlands for dealing with the problems of the Lowlands? The Lowlands of Scotland, agriculturally speaking, are incomparably nearer in all their conditions of life to the North of England than to the Highlands, and if you want expert opinion you had better travel to Northumberland or Cumberland rather than to Inverness-shire or Ross-shire. Does anybody doubt that? If so, he is not qualified to talk about Scotland. But, after all, I decline to consider this question as a Scotch question in the sense in which the right hon. Gentleman considers it. To begin with, is there such a thing as a Bill relating exclusively to Scotland? There is no such thing. The idea that we can legislate either for Ireland, or Scotland, or Wales, or England, and that that legislation passed for these countries does not react upon the other countries, is a fantastic absurdity. That is why I think Scotchmen as Scotchmen, and having in view the legislation of their own country, should resist this proposal. It must, if you carry it, be followed in the long run by a similar proposal for England; and if Scotland is to be excluded from her share of legislating for England, the result will be that Scotland will not have a greater but a lesser power over the legislation not merely of the United Kingdom, but of Scotland itself, than she possesses at the present moment. Therefore, in the in-

terests of Scotchmen desiring to legislate for their own country, I protest against this scheme. But Scotchmen have an even deeper interest than the mere legislating for their own country. The greatest interest of Scotland is the greatness of the House of Commons. The greatest interest that Scotchmen can have is the ancient traditions of this House; and if you destroy them in the pretended interests of Scotland, then depend upon it a judicial revenge at no distant date will come upon you, and you will find Scotchmen excluded from their fair share of their inheritance of the legislation for these Three Kingdoms. I should like for a moment to ask the right hon. Gentleman what on earth he means by saying that in the proposed Grand Committee the ancient Rules governing Grand Committees have been carefully followed. The right hon. Gentleman evidently has not made himself acquainted with the method in which Grand Committees are constituted. I will endeavour to enlighten him. The mode by which Grand Committees are formed is this: An endeavour is made by those responsible for the selection of the original members of these Committees and of the added members to make the Committee as a whole the most perfect reflex possible of the constitution of this House, so far as regards the great Parties into which this House is divided. That is the principle which has governed not merely the constitution of Grand Committees, but all Committees, and, as I shall show, it is not merely the traditional practice, but a practice absolutely necessary if we are to maintain Governmental responsibility in matters of legislation. Now, what is the proposal of the Government—a proposal made without a word of explanation and without giving the House the slightest hint that they were initiating any new policy? As I understand, they mean to put every Scotch Member upon the Committee. There are 72 Scotch Members, 49 or 50 of whom are supporters of the Government, and 22 or 23 opposed to them. I may be allowed, perhaps, to state in passing that that distribution of Members by no means represents the distribution of opinion politically in Scotland. In fact, it has no resemblance to it whatever, for whereas the relation of Scotch Members in this House is as between 22 to 50 or 23 and 49, I believe

the actual votes cast in favour of the two Parties respectively is as nearly as possible equal; and if these 72 were divided according to the votes of the constituencies, and hon. Gentlemen opposite had no advantage from the method in which the seats are divided, the Members on this side of the House, instead of numbering 23, would number nearly one-half of the whole 72. But I only make that remark in passing, because I am quite ready to take for the purposes of the argument the present representation of Scotland in this House. To the 72 Scotch Members you propose to add 15, making your total up to 87. And I presume the Committee of Selection, in choosing the 15, would follow the immemorial principle of giving the Government eight and the Opposition seven. That would give the Government 57 and the Opposition 30 Members on the Committee. Is that the proportion between the two Parties in the House? Can you describe a Committee in which the Parties are divided in the proportion of 57 to 30 as having the slightest resemblance to a House of 670 Members, in which the majority of the Government is not so great as it would be in the Grand Committee? Why, a more shameless proposal surely was never made. To listen to the right hon. Gentleman they were carrying on the ancient traditions of Grand Committees; but we find, when we look into the figures, that it is only a concealed dodge for giving the Government in the Committee stage of Scotch Bills a power which they have not got and cannot get in the House of Commons as at present constituted or as it is likely, as far as I can judge, to be constituted in the future. I do not know what answer the Government will give to that; but one thing is perfectly clear, that this circumstance to which I have called your attention is alone sufficient to upset the Government scheme, because if you once admit it you will never again be able to apply the immemorial principle on which we form our Committees, and never again will a Committee, Grand or Select, be a reflection of opinion in this House. But that is not the conclusion of the case against the Government proposal. The right hon. Gentleman did not in his speech mention Ireland. He mentioned England very perfunctorily, but Ireland

not at all. After all, England and Ireland are portions of the United Kingdom, and when you are introducing a new and revolutionary scheme for dealing with the legislation of one part of the United Kingdom the least you can do is to tell us how your scheme will operate when by an inevitable logical process it is extended to other parts of the Kingdom also. Well, I take the case of Ireland first. Do you mean to extend this plan to Ireland? Is that your intention? It appears to me that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman could have been made word for word in favour of the application of such a plan to the case of Ireland, except that I suppose he would not have uttered a long and eloquent eulogy upon the brevity of Irish speaking. With that single exception there is no argument brought before us by the right hon. Gentleman which would not justify a precisely similar scheme if applied to Ireland. Well, then are you prepared to apply it to Ireland? I can only tell you that if you do a more chaotic condition of Irish legislation than that into which you will undoubtedly plunge can hardly be conceived. Hon. Members opposite may affect to think that that can only happen when a Unionist Government is in Office, and that if a Government of Liberal complexion holds the reins of power there will be harmony, and that nothing will be done in the Grand Committee by the majority of Members representing Irish constituencies to which the Government could object. But everybody knows that that is not the case. Everybody knows that, whilst hon. Gentlemen opposite may be perfectly prepared to wash their hands of Ireland and to allow Irishmen to cut their own throats in their own way in their own country, they would not allow Irishmen in this House to use this House for purposes which they knew to be unjust. Therefore, I believe that the Government will never dare to extend this plan to Ireland, although they think it can be safely extended to Scotland. But, after all, the case of Ireland is not so important or so serious as the case of England. The case of England was alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman, but it does not appear to us that he really understood the difficulty, which he certainly failed to surmount. I will take a concrete case. I will take the case of the Bill to which

the right hon. Gentleman referred, the Scotch Parish Councils Bill. The right hon. Gentleman proposes to hand over his Parish Councils Bill for Scotland to his new Grand Committee, and in that Grand Committee Scotchmen as Scotchmen and Home Rulers as Home Rulers will have it all their own way and will be able to do exactly what they liked with the Bill. Now, consider what happened in the case of England. You brought forward a Parish Councils Bill for England, but you did not send it to a Grand Committee composed of Englishmen with a small proportion of Scotchmen and Irishmen added. If you had done so a very different Bill would have emerged from the Committee to the one which you have lately passed into law, and I want to know whether you think that unequal treatment of that kind will be acquiesced in indefinitely by England? I speak upon this point as a Scotchman, and I say that no greater danger menaces the political interests of Scotland than the danger that by our insane action we may arouse England to a sense that she is an oppressed nationality, and compel her to use the power which she undoubtedly possesses to exclude from all share in her affairs those who do not happen to live within her borders. Then I should like the Government to consider this question of England from another point of view. The whole system of Constitutional government as developed in modern times is this:—A certain number of gentlemen are selected by the Crown who have the confidence of a majority of this House, and upon those gentlemen is thrown the burden not merely of administering the Army, the Navy, and all the Public Offices from day to day, but of directing and guiding the course of our legislation; and if you take away from the responsible Government of the day the power of directing our legislation you strip them of half their functions. What would be the position of a Government if there were an English Grand Committee of which they did not happen to possess the confidence? The Government will read a Bill a second time by the aid of their small Party majority. They will then send it to the English Grand Committee, and that Committee will deal with it as it thinks fit, and will then send it back to the House very likely

in a strangely different guise from that in which it was originally presented. The unfortunate Ministerial author of the measure, beaten time after time in the Grand Committee, will have either to drop the Bill, to accept it as it is, or to reverse on the Report stage everything done in the Grand Committee. Of these three possible alternatives which is the one the Government would desire? Would they like to have to fight on the Report stage a Bill of which they disapprove; would they prefer to drop their favourite measures rather than see them passed, or would they reverse on the Report stage everything done in the Committee stage, having before them the certain conclusion that they would be told on every platform throughout England that they had gone against the declared wishes of the English people as expressed in the Grand Committee. I say their position would be intolerable, and that Government would no more trust a plan by which they would hand over their English legislation to a Grand Committee than they would dare, for example, to carry into effect many of the reforms which are so glibly advocated on platforms during bye-elections. I wish the Government would explain to us on what principle they mean to refuse this boon to England, and if they do not mean to refuse it, how they mean to carry on the Government with the Grand Committee system applicable to England. They are in this absolute dilemma: Give this to Scotland and refuse it to England, and you will make every Englishman and every English Member feel that he is not allowed to legislate for his own country as Scotchmen are allowed to legislate for their country. Grant it to England, and you make legislation by a responsible Government an absurdity whenever a Government happens to be in Office which does not command a majority of English votes. I have often thought of this question, and have asked myself how that dilemma is to be avoided. Never have I found anybody who could tell me a method of avoiding it, nor have I ever myself been able to devise any such method. I do not know that it is necessary for me to add anything to the arguments which I have endeavoured to address to the question—in that respect breaking away from the example set me by the right hon. Gentleman; but I

think, if the House realises that one consequence of this must be as regards Scotland that in every case in which the House reverses the decision of the Scotch Grand Committee you will embitter Scotch feeling, and that you will give occasion for friction between the two countries which does not exist at the present time; if you reflect on that in the first place—if you reflect, in the second place, that this scheme of appointing a Grand Committee is nothing more than a device by means of which the Government are to obtain an influence over the Committee stage of Scotch Bills outside the walls of this Chamber which they never could obtain inside it; if you reflect that this is an absolute departure from every tradition that has hitherto guided this House in framing these Committees; if you reflect that this is an outrage upon England if you do not extend this privilege to her, but the destruction in this House if you do extend it to her of Parliamentary Government by a responsible Minister in this House; if you reflect, as I am bound as a Scotchman to reflect, that these sham gifts to my country are necessarily but the prelude to depriving her, as I think, of some of her most valuable political privileges; and if, lastly, you remember that it is a change which goes to the very root of our whole Parliamentary system, which has not been proposed as an organic scheme, has not been laid before us with all its logical consequences, has not been presented to our judgment in a form in which we can finally decide upon it, then I think you will agree with me that we ought absolutely to decline to consider for one instant a proposal which, if made at all, must be presented to us in a very different guise and a very different speech to that which the right hon. Gentleman has made. As embodying, not indeed my views upon the broad principles involved—those I have endeavoured to state in my speech—but, as involving my views upon the procedure of the Government in this matter, I beg now to ask the House to accept the words of an Amendment to the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman which I have placed, Mr. Speaker, in your hands.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word “That,” to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

“This House declines to sanction, in regard to Bills relating to one portion only of the United Kingdom, any plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of Committees of this House shall be fundamentally altered until it has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon a general scheme which shall extend a like treatment to Bills relating to each of the other portions of the United Kingdom.”
—(Mr. A. J. Balfour.)

Question proposed, “That the words ‘in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order, No. 47’ stand part of the Question.”

*MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) said, that in rising to follow the right hon. Gentleman who had last spoken, he did not for a moment suppose that he could meet him on equal terms in argument, and his only excuse for taking the course he had, perhaps rashly, taken was because he thought it desirable this question should not be discussed entirely by means of one of those oratorical duels between the Front Benches which were the subject of such general admiration and instruction to them, but which sometimes prevented the views of an independent Member being heard. He wondered, in listening to the eloquent speech of the right hon. Gentleman, in which he described the proposal made by the Secretary for Scotland as subverting the ancient traditions of this House, whether the right hon. Gentleman had in his mind the remembrance that a similar proposal, not applied to Scotland but Ireland, had been made many years ago by Mr. John Bright, who was not distinguished by a rash desire to subvert the ancient traditions either of this House or of the British Constitution? The right hon. Gentleman told them that as a Scotchman—and he was one of the most distinguished of living Scotchmen—much as he enjoyed addressing his countrymen he did not desire to be confined to that privilege, but that he desired a larger and more varied audience than he would have under this proposal. In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman did not number among his many distinctions that of being a Scottish Member, therefore his privileges were not attacked in this Motion; and, in the second place, if he were, and thought fit in pursuance of his duty to take part in the proceedings of the Standing Committee, that would not prevent him or any Member of that Committee from afterwards taking part in the

proceedings of the whole House. The right hon. Gentleman said that Scottish Members were not elected by their constituencies solely to deal with Scottish questions. No, but they were elected in the first instance to deal with Scottish questions. If he might venture upon a general criticism of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman he should point out that he had treated the whole question as regarded these Committees from a Party point of view. He seemed to assume that any Scotch Bill sent to a Committee of Scottish Members would divide them, as they were divided now, on great principles in this House. He (Mr. Paul) did not believe that would be the result. His own experience had been very small, but he did sit upon a Standing Committee which dealt with a Scottish measure—the Fatal Accidents Inquiry Bill. He and other Scottish Members took a great interest in that Bill, and he did not find on the Committee that they were divided in accordance with their opinions on Home Rule for Ireland or Home Rule for Scotland. And was the Scottish Local Government Bill a measure which would naturally divide the Scottish Members in accordance with Party? No, he believed they would be always found voting on it independently, and regarding it as a measure on which every Scottish Member would endeavour to do what was best for the national interests, what was best for Scotland and the conduct of local government in that country, and for this purpose alone. The right hon. Gentleman said there were Highland Members who might not understand the position of the Lowlands, and Lowland Members who might not understand the position of the Highlands. Yes, but they would be all there. All parts of Scotland would be represented, as all parts of the Kingdom were supposed to be represented on Standing Committees dealing with an English Bill. He was told that England had an equal right to a Standing Committee on an English Bill. He most frankly and fully admitted it. He would take the case to which the right hon. Gentleman referred—the case of the Local Government Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said that the English Members were out-voted by the Members from Scotland and Ireland, and if that, in any case, were so,

Mr. Paul

he (Mr. Paul) must bear part of the responsibility, and he bore it very cheerfully; for what happened when that Bill went up to another place? Very considerable alterations were made in it, most restrictive alterations going in the same direction—but very much further—as the Amendments moved from the Opposition side in Committee. The House of Commons rejected all these alterations of the slightest importance, and he believed that in every single case the rejection of these Amendments on a Division was supported by an English majority, because he knew that gentlemen opposite who supported the Lords Amendments did not receive the assistance of the followers of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, who were accustomed to act with them in general politics. This, therefore, was not an instance in which an Act had been altered and amended over the heads and against the opinion of the majority of English Members. He did not believe, in the case of Scotland, that that was a real danger at all. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Secretary for Scotland had said nothing about national sentiment. What had national sentiment to do with it? This was a matter of business. It was an attempt—the right hon. Gentleman thought an unfortunate attempt—to get Scottish business done with greater celerity, not in accordance with the views of any one Party in Scotland, but in accordance with the general opinion of the Scottish public on matters which they understood. The right hon. Gentleman said that that (the Liberal) side of the House would have an unfair preponderance on the Standing Committee, because they would have a majority of 27. If this Committee was appointed, and if the Scottish Local Government Bill were sent to it, there would not be a series of Party Divisions, but a series of businesslike discussions. Why any English Member should desire the privilege of taking part in the details of Scottish business he could not conceive. He was sure he did not regard it as any privilege to take part in the details of a Bill which purely related to England, although it happened to be his own country, and he was quite willing to leave it to the Representatives of English constituencies. He would point out, if this majority, which the right hon. Gentle-

man considered unfair, were used for purposes which he considered illegitimate, it was open to the right hon. Gentleman or any Member of his Party to raise any question again in this House upon Report. He did not believe that would be done unreasonably or in small cases ; but if there were any reason to suppose the Standing Committee had abused the powers entrusted to it, it would be open to anyone to invite the House to reverse the decision of the Committee. He supported this proposal, not from any Party point of view, but because he believed it was really a business-like reform, which was intended to, and which he was sure would conduce to the despatch of Scottish business, and he was persuaded when it was tried it would be generally accepted by public opinion as being, not a proposal for subverting the traditions of the House of Commons, or any other traditions, but a proposal for a reasonable, sensible, moderate, and practical purpose.

*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) said, that curiously enough his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, who introduced this proposal, was an Englishman representing a Scottish constituency ; his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, who followed him, was a Scotchman representing an English constituency, whilst the third speaker, the Member for South Edinburgh, was an Englishman representing a Scottish constituency. That showed how they worked in and in, in regard to nationalities, and how there ought not to be any hard-and-fast line drawn between the politics of the three countries. He would like to ask his hon. Friend whether he as an Englishman so represented South Edinburgh, because he was specially acquainted with Scottish business ? [Mr. PAUL : I endeavour to learn.] At the same time he did not think an apprentice, however willing, was the sort of person they ought to employ as an expert in important business. He congratulated the Secretary for Scotland upon the magnificence of his courage. He could imagine no courage greater than for the right hon. Gentleman to lay down the proposition that this was a non-partisan proposal, and then support his statement by proving that his own Party were the only people who had ever voted for it. Again, the right hon.

Gentleman said it was exactly the same as the other Grand Committees, and its opinion ought to have every possible weight, because the talk in the Grand Committee was to be an absolute reflex of what the talk was in the House. But it was the reflex of votes in the House itself that they ought to have in the Grand Committees. They did not care much about the talk, but it was because a Report which came from a Grand Committee was supported by votes which were a reflex of the majority of the whole of this House that such Reports of Standing Grand Committees had so much weight in the House itself. The Secretary for Scotland went on to say that this Scottish Grand Committee was a charming substitute for the gag, and he appeared to consider it a magnificent thing for the Scottish Members to be able to air their eloquence in a Grand Committee, instead of being closed and gagged in the House of Commons. Possibly that might please some people, but it did not hold out any special attractions to him. This proposal was that the Committee should consist of the whole of the Scottish Members with 15 additional Members to be added by the Committee of Selection. These 15 were added no doubt for one of two reasons. In the first place, perhaps, to enable Scotchmen who sat for English constituencies to take part in the deliberations, and to give the Scotch Members the benefit of their advice and experience, because many Scotchmen sitting for English constituencies had very great experience of Scottish business. But, on the other hand, these 15 might be added so that a sort of supervision might be exercised over the Scotchmen, to see that they acted exactly as they ought. He was inclined to think that these 15 were, as a matter of fact, to be added as a sort of sop to meet the scruples of hon. Members, who were very well represented by the hon. Member for Bedford city. That hon. Gentleman was pre-eminently qualified to speak on this subject from his long experience on the Committee of Selection. He would ask the hon. Gentleman whether the addition of 15 Members, most of whom might very possibly be Scotchmen, to the Committee of Scottish Members numbering 72, would prevent the Scottish Members from so preponderating in numbers as to override all other

opinions? Unless it did prevent them from so preponderating it was, in the opinion of the hon. Member for Bedford himself, a bad and dangerous proposal. From the time he first had the honour of entering the House he had listened very attentively to the words of wisdom which had fallen from the lips of the hon. Member for Bedford. At first he used to look with admiration at the hon. Gentleman, who stood up as a sort of umpire between the two Parties. As time went on, however, and as he studied the hon. Gentleman's declarations, he was sorry to say he had been obliged to come to the conclusion that this self-constituted umpire was rather too much like those extremely useful umpires at cricket who invariably gave their own side "not out," and he was inclined to think that on the present occasion they would find the Member for Bedford would give his own side "not out," certainly by vote, probably both by vote and voice. But there was another body of Members whom this addition of 15 would rather annoy. For instance, the hon. Member for Dumfries said, on the 6th March, 1888, that he would not for a moment ask for or care to see a Committee which did not consist exclusively of Scottish Members. How would he like this Committee to which 15 additional Members were to be added? The hon. Member on the same occasion further said that, as a Scottish Member, he would never think of voting against English opinion on any Bill exclusively relating to England. He supposed the hon. Member for Dumfries bore that in mind during the whole of the proceedings on the English Parish Councils Bill, and he trusted he would also bear it in mind when the subject of Sunday closing for England came to the front. The Secretary for Scotland gave no reasons for this proposal, but he fancied the reasons in the view of the Government were, first, the neglect of Scottish business; and, second, that this Committee was to be a sort of means of giving effect to the Home Rule principle. As to the neglect of Scottish business, no one realised more than he the lamentable remissness on the part of the present Government with regard to Scottish business, but that was not always the case. From 1886 to 1892 even the Scottish Gladstonian papers were perfectly astonished at the progress they made with Scottish business. For

instance, they passed the Local Government Act for Scotland, the Burgh Police Act—about the biggest Act of Parliament ever passed—the Criminal Law Amendment Act, Free Education, and so on, whilst, at the same time, Scotland was deriving benefit from such general measures as the Mines Regulation Act. But there was no doubt there was a most lamentable neglect of Scottish business at present. As far as he knew, the only Scottish measure that had been passed during this Parliament was the County of the City of Glasgow Act, a small, comparatively unimportant, and entirely non-contentious measure. Two other Scotch measures were indeed introduced, and it was entirely owing to the present Government that any time at all was wasted upon them. One was the Scottish Sea Fisheries Bill, which was received with howls of execration by the people whom it principally concerned, and the other was the Suspensory Bill for Scotland, which was simply laughed out of court. That was the whole of the programme as regarded Scotland, everything else being indefinitely postponed and deferred by the present Government. Even the Scottish Education Estimates for last year were not brought before the House until the 28th of July, and even then they had to be discussed before the Scotch Education Report was issued. That showed gross mismanagement. Yet never was a Government in such a position as the present Government to deal with Scottish questions. Six Members of the Cabinet, ever since the formation of this Government had been closely connected with Scotland; besides many subordinate Members of the Government were also Scotch Members, and would anybody tell him that in these circumstances they had not got the power if they only had the will to put Scotch questions to the front? But as the Opposition had always pointed out, it was perfectly impossible to expect the present Government to proceed with Scotch and English measures while they were hampered with Home Rule and loved Irish questions alone. Ireland was, as a matter of fact, the spoiled darling of the present Cabinet, whilst Scotland and England got all the kicks and none of the halfpence. As he had said, a second reason for the introduction of this proposal was that it would be a means of giving effect to the

Home Rule principle. He would, however, point out that the Scottish Home Rule Association, of which the Member for Caithness was President, scouted the very idea of this proposal for a Grand Committee, and further, that the hon. Baronet who represented the College Division of Glasgow, on March 6, 1888, said—

“As for this peddling and pottering through Grand Committees it was not wanted by the people of Scotland. It would not satisfy them, and it would not cure the evils complained of.”

In reality, legislation raised much more questions of community and identity of interest than of community and identity of nationality. The interests of his constituents in Lanarkshire were infinitely more bound up with the interests of Lancashire and Yorkshire than with those of Orkney and Shetland, or, indeed, with any of the seaboard counties of Scotland. But if they did go in for this proposal of a Grand Committee on the score of nationality they must bear in mind that Englishmen or even Scotchmen domiciled in England were in no way Scottish National Members. As a matter of fact those hon. Members who were, in reality, much more English than Scotch, though they happened to represent Scottish constituencies, felt themselves bound, as Anglo-Scottish Members, to be much more Scotch than the Scotch themselves. They were the people who were always talking of Scotch opinion being overridden, and he found when they spoke in this strain they always meant Scottish Gladstonian opinion. Had this so called Scottish opinion—which he called Gladstonian opinion—always proved to be in the right? In the last Parliament the temperance question was brought prominently forward in connection with the Local Government Bill for Scotland. There was a proposal made that the licensing question should be handed over to the County Councils, the Gladstonian Party saying it was the will of Scotland that this should be done. He had the Circular of the Independent Order of the Good Templars of Scotland in his hand who, having considered this proposal, said that nothing could be more monstrous or lamentable, whilst the Scottish National Temperance Convention said that no proposal could have been worse. Therefore, on this great

question of temperance, on which the Gladstonian Members pretended to be qualified to speak, they were, in the last Parliament, utterly wrong so far as these two important Societies were concerned. But even in this very Parliament, when his right hon. Friend introduced the first Education Minute, several Gladstonian Members got up, and professing, as always, to speak for the whole people of Scotland, stated that was not at all what was desired. The Secretary for Scotland withdrew his first and introduced his second Education Minute, and Circulars were sent out to all the different Committees in Scotland to ascertain their views. He had the Report of the Scotch Education Department, which showed that of 39 Educational Committees 24 preferred to adhere to the first Minute, while only 15 were in favour of the second, showing that the Scotch Gladstonian Members were again utterly wrong. The Report of the Education Department stated—

“Notwithstanding the divergence of opinion shown, and the large support which their original proposal has met with, my Lords,”

that was, of course, the Secretary for Scotland—

“feel bound to attach great weight to the strong expression of opinion by the Scottish Representatives during the Debate upon the subject, and they hesitate in view of it to limit further than is absolutely necessary the freedom of local action.”

The Scottish Gladstonians were thus clearly wrong with regard to temperance and Scottish education, and they were equally wrong in wishing that a suspensory Bill for Scotland for that proposal had been howled out of court with shrieks of execration. With regard to the Sea Fisheries Bill, never had there been a measure so discredited and disgraced, though it was praised by most of the Scottish Gladstonian Members. With reference to the proposal before the House, there were many objections and difficulties in it connected even with procedure, not the least being the financial difficulty. He, therefore, regretted the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not present, but he could promise the right hon. Gentleman there would be absolute unanimity among the Scottish Members on this financial question. They would all try to get as large grants from the Imperial Exchequer as possible. If the Sea

Fisheries (Scotland) Bill passed it would not be the local rates but the Imperial funds that would be called upon. But he would point out to the right hon. Gentleman the great difficulty, which was really the *crux* of the whole matter. It was embodied in the familiar proverb, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." If Scotch Bills were sent to a Committee of Scotch Members then Irish Bills must be committed to Irish Members, Welsh Bills to Welsh Members, and, above all, English Bills must be sent to a Grand Committee of English Members. Just consider for a moment how that would work out. How would the present Government like to send their Evicted Tenants' Bill to a Committee of the Irish Members? How would they like to send their Welsh Disestablishment Bill to a Committee composed of Welsh and English Members? Again, how would they like to have sent their English Parish Council Bill—which, by-the-bye, as Lord Rosebery boasted in Edinburgh, had been passed by Irish votes—to a Committee composed of English Members? Or, how would they like to hand over such a question as English Sunday Closing to a Committee of English Members? But it might be urged that the Government would never commit so suicidal an Act. They knew they were in a minority in England, which Lord Rosebery called the "predominant partner" of the United Kingdom. Let it be remembered that the present Government would not always be in power. Before many months, possibly before many weeks were over, another Government might be in power which would have a majority in England, "the predominant partner" of the United Kingdom. Then what a precedent would have been set by the adoption of this proposal. Was it supposed that the predominant partner in the United Kingdom would consent to be domineered over by the other partners? They would find, he thought, that the predominant partner would insist upon having predominance. As to the details of the Bills, measures of all kinds throughout the United Kingdom had to be framed more or less in accordance with the policy of the Government of the day, and the Government of the day and its policy were guided by the wishes of the majority in the House of Commons as a whole. Englishmen who

were good enough to represent Scotch constituencies were naturally obliged to talk a great deal about Scotch nationality and Scotch opinion. They had to out-Herod Herod. In ordinary life it was only a "*parvenu*" who was always posing as being a descendant of the Plantagenets. The posing patriots from Putney and the Highlanders from Hampstead were about as contemptible as the posing *parvenu*. Curiously enough, he (Mr. Hozier) loved Scotland more than any Englishman who ever yet sat for a Scottish constituency, and could afford to be perfectly frank. Scotland had always been, and please God always would be, a nation—unlike Wales, she need not pretend to be a nation. The right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir G. O. Morgan), no doubt, had told Scotchmen they had no language, but only a dialect, but at all events Scotland had clearly defined boundaries, and they required no qualification, as was necessary with Welshmen in speaking of "Wales including Monmouthshire." A Scottish King succeeded to the English Throne, and Scotchmen were proud to think that England was therefore part of Scotland, and that London was the capital of the United Kingdom.

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) said, one very short answer to the suggestion of the right hon. Member opposite, that Scotch Bills should not be sent to a Scotch Committee without at the same time sending English Bills to a Standing Committee composed of Englishmen, was, that a Committee composed of all the English Members of the House would be a practical impossibility. There were about 400 English Members in the House, and a Standing Committee composed of all those Members would not be able to find accommodation within the precincts of Westminster. A new room would have to be provided for that Committee, as large as the House itself. As Chairman of Grand Committees of six years' standing, he could speak with practical experience on this subject. In the first place, the formation of a Scotch Committee composed entirely of the Scotch Members would practically exclude Scotchmen from serving on any Committees relating to other matters, for no man, however eager for work, could possibly serve on two Standing Committees. But there was another nationality, who were

even more entitled than Scotchmen to have their affairs referred to their own Representatives. He referred to Wales. He was not expressing his own opinion alone, but would quote the words of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, whose opinion he was sure the hon. Member would respect, in one of the last speeches he made in that House. Speaking in answer to the hon. Member for North Denbighshire, the right hon. Gentleman said—

"I should be very glad indeed, after we have seen what practical progress can be made with the Scotch measures, to see what better provision can be made for Welsh measures, for it will be felt that Wales should not, I think, stand in a worse position."

He had at one time thought of putting down an Amendment which would extend the Resolution to Wales, but unfortunately such Amendments were like red herrings, to draw the attention of the House from the issue upon which it should be concentrated to side issues. When once the experiment had been made in regard to Scotland he hoped the Government would see their way to extending the operation of the Resolution to Wales. However, it was with Scotland that they had to do at present. The hon. Member spoke of this as a dose of Home Rule. But it was a very infinitesimal dose. What would happen was that Scotch Bills would, after being introduced and read a second time, be referred to a Committee consisting not entirely of Scotch Members but with 15 others added—why, he did not know. For his own part, he should have thought it would be better to send them to the Scotch Members. The measures having, in effect, been referred to the Scotch Members would come back to the House itself and be discussed finally on Report. Certain results would follow from adopting that course. In the first place, discussions upon them in Committee of the whole House would be avoided; in the next place, such Committees did not, as a general rule, act upon Party lines. It had been said that there would be an enormous preponderating majority of Liberals on the Committee; but he understood gentlemen opposite to say that the next General Election would reverse all that. Anyhow, he did not think it would make the slightest difference, because, as a matter of fact, in nearly every case when he had sat as Chairman of a Grand Committee there was no such thing

as a Party vote. During last Session he had, as Chairman of a Grand Committee, taken a course which some considered to have been dictated by Party spirit. After a discussion had gone on for, as he considered, an almost interminable time, he had ruled that the Question should be put. It was said he did so to prevent an Amendment of a political opponent being discussed. That was quite untrue, for he should have done just the same thing in the case of a Liberal Member. At the same time, he might say that although he thought his action was technically right, and although it was afterwards approved by the Speaker, he regretted it now, for it was impossible for a Chairman on these Grand Committees to be too careful to avoid even the semblance of partiality. But really the great argument in favour of them was that the services were obtained of men who understood the business brought before them. How many of the entire 670 Members of the House knew anything about such matters as were ordinarily referred to Grand Committees? As a rule, no one attended them but those who were interested in the question; and if Scotch measures were referred to a Scotch Committee it would only be attended by men who understood and were really competent to discuss the matter brought forward. That was the result of his own practical experience on the Bail Bill (Scotland) Committee, when every English Member as soon as the discussion had been commenced fled from the room as if it was infected by the plague. One of the Amendments was proposed on the ground that the Motion did not go far enough, but the answer to that had been given by the Secretary for Scotland. Another Amendment had been placed on the Paper by the hon. Member for Wigtonshire, that the Motion was contrary to the usages of Parliament. But the Standing Committees themselves were an innovation upon the usages of Parliament, and 30 years ago they would have been resented as an infraction of the privileges of Parliament. Besides, this proposal was not quite so novel an experiment as had been represented. When he first entered the House it was the custom for Scotch measures to be referred to an informal meeting of all the Scotch Members. There was a general consensus of opinion among sensible men that measures

affecting Scotland should be discussed by Scotchmen, and at these informal meetings the opinions of the Scotch Members were elicited; on those expressions of opinion changes were made in the Bills, and the result was that Scotch measures used for a long time to be passed through the House of Commons with the greatest ease and rapidity. It was only by adapting our old institutions to the changed conditions of the times that we could hope to preserve the one or satisfy the other.

*MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) said, the remarks which had fallen from the right hon. Member for East Denbighshire raised the question what kind of Bills it was proposed to refer to this Scotch Grand Committee. The right hon. Member had suggested that it would be unnecessary to appoint a similar Grand Committee for England, because the Scotch Members would have their whole time taken up by their attendance upon the Committees on Scotch Bills, and would naturally be unable to sit upon Committees dealing with English measures. But what of those English Bills which were now discussed in Committees of the whole House? He would ask whether or not it was proposed that Bills of a contentious character should be sent to the Grand Committee? Hitherto, only Bills of a non-contentious character were supposed to be referred to Grand Committees. But it was rather difficult to distinguish between contentious and non-contentious measures. A very good illustration of that difficulty occurred during the last Session of Parliament in the case of the Employers' Liability Bill. If the House could be assured that it was intended to refer to this Scotch Committee only Bills of a non-contentious character much of the objection would be removed; but the House had had no such assurance given, and the idea seemed to be that Bills of every kind should be so referred. If it was intended to refer such a measure as a Parish Councils Bill to a Scotch Grand Committee, how could it be maintained that the two countries were receiving equal treatment? Unless this proposal could be applied to the other parts of the United Kingdom as well as to Scotland it stood condemned. If this Resolution were passed, and the Government refused to extend it to England, their successors would have to retrace the step now taken. The

only alternative would be to complete it by extending these Committees, at all events, to England. All the hon. Members who had spoken in favour of this Resolution had endeavoured to minimise its partisan character. But its partisan character could not be concealed. In 1884, when the extension of the franchise was being considered, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian put forward a most extraordinary and fantastic theory of representation—that the number of Representatives should be larger in proportion to the distance from the centre, thus giving to Ireland and Scotland a larger number of Representatives in the House than their population would strictly entitle them to. That theory was laughed out of court at the time; but the Party opposite were trying to adopt it in practice. They acted upon it last year when they proposed to bring Irish Members here to vote on British questions, while British Members were to be prevented from having a voice in Irish questions; and it was very much the same thing in this proposal. The proposal of the Government was so constructed as to enable a Radical Government to pass Radical measures distasteful to the majority of English Representatives by means of Scotch and Irish votes, and when a Unionist Government came into power, to make it impossible for them to introduce a measure dealing with Scotland without danger that that measure would be fundamentally altered in Grand Committee to such an extent as would make it no longer acceptable to its authors. The scheme was obviously inequitable, unless extended to England and Ireland. Yet it could not be so extended without danger to national unity. He was a Scotsman, like the Leader of the Opposition, sitting for an English constituency. Personally, he regarded himself, in the first instance, as a citizen of the United Kingdom, and a Scotsman only in the second instance. He did not want to reverse that order, and become a Scotsman first. In both these capacities, however, he objected to the Resolution, even if it were extended to England and Ireland. He felt convinced that such a scheme would weaken their common country by tending to split it up into nationalities. If they once embarked upon this policy, it would ultimately have the effect of rousing England to assert

Sir G. Osborne Morgan

her claims as against other parts of the United Kingdom, and that could only have one end—namely, the degradation of Ireland and Scotland into the position of subordinate provinces.

*MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) said, the Committee must always represent the Party that was in power at the time. The Liberal Party was at present in power, and the Scottish Members were Liberals. The Scottish Committee would therefore have a Liberal majority. It was perfectly true that that majority would not exactly correspond to the majority in this House; but that, after all, was a matter of very little object. If questions rose on Party lines in such a Committee—which he did not think they often did—the Party in power would still be in a majority, and it seemed to him a very small affair whether this majority was a large one or a small one. He maintained that the cases of England and Scotland were entirely different. Scotland required this scheme, and England did not. In this Parliament Scottish affairs did not get their requisite attention, and English affairs did. If Scottish affairs were attended to as English affairs were, as many laws should be passed for Scotland as for England. Population was not a thing that settled the legislative demands of a country. They were going to introduce a Parish Councils Bill. If Scotland had 40,000,000 of inhabitants instead of four, would they need 10 Bills? They might, under certain circumstances—if every 4,000,000 additional inhabitants were entirely different from each other and the first 4,000,000. In fact, the question depended on the complexity of the social, commercial, industrial, and political life of the country. That was the real measure of the legislative necessities of a country. In this case, he maintained, Scotland was the same as England, and Scotland offered as great a field for legislation as England itself. Did Scotland get it? The Imperial Parliament passed certain measures which were applicable to England and Scotland both, and it passed certain measures applicable to Ireland and Wales. He put these out of the question. There remained the measures which applied to England and Scotland alone. If Scotland got fair treatment, there would be as many measures passed for Scotland as for England. In the 12 years from 1880 to

1892 there were three different Parliaments and four different Governments in Office. One half of the time the Conservative Government ruled, and the other half the Liberal Government. During that time 318 measures were passed for England exclusively, and for Scotland only 102. That was to say, three times as many for the one as the other. That showed distinctly the inequality of legislative treatment, and it was in order to redress that inequality that he, for one, was willing to support the present proposal for a Committee. He did not regard it as a step towards Federalism, which was a much wider and more important proposal, but he regarded it as a simple temporary alleviation of the block in Scottish business.

*SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton) said, it was extremely refreshing to one who had occupied a seat in the House for some years to receive an assurance from a Member who had sat in the House for as many months that they might accept this proposal with every assurance of safety. The hon. Gentleman who had just finished a most interesting and too brief a speech had told them that there was no ground whatever for the apprehensions on that side of the House because of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland; but he thought it would be admitted both by his own friends and by Members on that side of the House also that he entirely forgot to adduce anything in the shape of argument in support of that contention, and that they might therefore be forgiven if they still entertained a considerable feeling of apprehension as to the ultimate effect and conclusion of the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman. He had given notice upon the Paper of an Amendment to the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman. He did not propose to move that Amendment, for this reason—that his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition had already moved an Amendment which, if it did not go quite as far as his own, still embodied the principle which he wished the House to take into consideration. If he might express any preference in favour of his own Amendment it was in this respect—that it seemed to him possible that there might be placed upon the terms of his right hon. Friend's Amendment a construction which he was sure he had guarded him-

self against, and which the words themselves were not intended to bear. Under the guise of an apparently simple Amendment of the Rules of Procedure the Secretary for Scotland had put before them an insidious and far-reaching measure. He proposed to ask the House to regard it in two aspects—first, its result on the character of the Imperial Legislature; and, secondly, its results as affecting the standing and convenience of the Scotch Members. The second, of course, was by far the least important. He proposed to take it first. The Scotch Members were not merely delegates returned to give voice upon affairs restricted in scope to the material interests of limited localities, but upon Imperial matters which affected the Scotch people just as much as they affected the people South of the Tweed. That was the interpretation which he put upon their Constitutional function—that was the mission on which they were sent from the last General Election. What they had to consider was how far their ability to discharge that function and to carry out that mission would be interfered with by the pressure of the additional duties which would be thrown upon them under the Resolution of the Secretary for Scotland. He believed it was admitted generally that there were limits to physical endurance. Both Houses of Parliament had been largely occupied of late, and rightly so, in consideration of the conditions of and the hours of labour. They had had a Sweating Commission, and there had been legislation also upon the hours of labour of railway servants, and it was only two or three nights ago that they were listening to the hon. Member for Peterborough, who was urging the Committee to take into consideration the hours of attendance of messengers and others employed about the Houses of Parliament. Members of Parliament were made of the same material as messengers of Parliament, and there was a limit to their physical endurance, just as there was a limit to the endurance of the messengers of Parliament, and it was time that a word should be put in upon their behalf lest their hours of labour should become excessive also. If this Resolution was carried they would have the Grand Committee meeting at 12 o'clock in the day. Of course, it would be the desire of every Scotch Member to

take a full part in these proceedings, and he would be expected by his constituency to do so. The proceedings of the Grand Committee would last until 3 o'clock, and then the Scotch Members were to be asked to come down to that House to take part in discussions upon questions of the highest and greatest importance—questions of peace and war, of public liberty, of commerce, agriculture and education. Would they be, under those circumstances, in the same position as English and Irish and Welsh Members? Would they be as fresh when they had to undertake business in the House as other hon. Members, or would they not rather find themselves at a great disadvantage? Was it not conceivable that after having their minds saturated with the subtleties of the hon. Member for Ross, or wearied with the witticisms of the hon. Member for East Edinburgh, they would be at a disadvantage compared with the Members who came down to the House without these exhausting preliminaries? Of course, it might be said that in this respect they would be on a par with the Members who took part in Committees and Royal Commissions. But the fact was that at the present time they took their full share of the work done upon the Royal Commissions and Committees. He himself served upon one Royal Commission, four Committees of the House last year, and a Departmental Committee besides. It was not for him to say that the presence of Scotch Members upon these Committees was essential, but he might say that Parliamentary life would be shorn, so far as the Scotch Members were concerned, of a great deal of the interest which it at present possessed if they had not an opportunity of discharging their duties upon these Committees. It was his desire that the Scotch Members should take their full share in the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament; and they were extremely loth to surrender any part which they now took in those proceedings. Then, were Scotch Members to be debarred from serving on Private Bill Committees? Perhaps the Scotch Members would not feel the deprivation very keenly if that were so, but, at the same time, it would hardly be fair to English and Irish Members to throw upon them the entire burden of the Private Bill legislation upstairs. Attend-

ance upon Private Bill Committees was compulsory, and that rule would debar the Scotch Members from taking part in the proceedings of the Grand Committee, and therefore one of two things must happen—the Scotch Member must be a less useful Member in the respect that he would not be available for the purposes of Private Bill legislation, or he would be obliged to sacrifice his duties as a Scotch Member of Parliament. If that was the case in regard to private Members, how did it operate with regard to the occupants of the Bench opposite? There were sitting on that Bench the Members for Forfar, Stirling Burghs, East Fife, the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow, Leith Burghs, Dundee, the Border Burghs, and the County of Clackmannan, all of whom were Members of the present Government. He was sure that Members of the present Administration would agree with their predecessors that it was a sufficiently full tax upon a man's energy to transact the work of a Public Department, and afterwards to represent that Department, and his constituents also, in this House, without the additional duty of representing the interests of Scotland at the same time upon a Grand Committee. Even the present Members of the Ministry had not succeeded in finding a solution of Sir Boyle Roche's problem. He yielded to no man in admiration for the abilities of the Secretary of State for War, but he believed that it was even beyond his power to attend to his business at the War Office and simultaneously to watch over the interests of the people of the Stirling Burghs at the grand Committee. The Home Secretary, too, was popularly supposed to be no sinecurist, but the good folk in the East Neuk o' Fife would expect him to have some care for their affairs before the Grand Committee, and it must come to this—that either the business of a great Department must be neglected, and the Ministers must attend the meetings of the Scotch Grand Committee, or that, upon the other hand, the proceedings of that Committee must be carried on in the absence of some of the ablest of Scottish Representatives. He should be told, perhaps, that he took an exaggerated view of the amount of business that would be relegated to these Grand Committees. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member for

Caitness said "Hear, hear!" Well, one of two things must be the truth—either this Scottish business was so moderate in amount that it would not overtax the energies of the Scottish Members in the way in which he had sketched, or it was so great and pressing that it was utterly beyond the powers of the Imperial Parliament, as such, to transact it. One of these two alternatives must be the truth. If the first was the truth, then he submitted there was no case for the change. If Scottish business was so moderate in amount that it would not overtax the energies of Scottish Members, then it must be the method and not the machine that was at fault—the administration of business, and not the extent of it. But if the second was the case, that Scottish business was so large in bulk as to have got beyond all control of the House, then Scottish Members would certainly be under the disability he had described. The hon. Member who spoke last had made an allusion illustrated by a profuse amount of figures which he (Sir H. Maxwell) confessed he was not able to follow as to the amount of Scottish business transacted in the last 12 years measured by the number of Bills. Well, he would not go back 12 years. If, as the hon. Member said, 102 exclusively Scottish measures passed into law in those 12 years and at the same time 318 exclusively English measures passed into law, he did not think there was much to complain of. England was more than three times as large as Scotland, and the calculation of the hon. Member had only given England three times as many Bills as Scotland.

MR. CROMBIE said, he had tried to explain that population should not be the measure.

SIR H. MAXWELL said, that was a matter of opinion. England had nine times as many people as Scotland, and if the measure were, as some people thought it ought, by population England should have nine times as many Bills as Scotland instead of three times as many. He would go back no farther than last Session. Last Session was exceptional in many respects, though not exceptional in the amount of Scottish business presented for the consideration of the House. There were two Bills mentioned in the Queen's Speech, and one of them was proceeded with. There was the Scottish

Suspensory Bill, which did not seem to excite very much enthusiasm either within the walls of the House or without them, and there was the Scottish Fishery Bill. The latter measure he would not say was an average example, but it was a very striking example of the management of Scottish business in the House. They should scrutinise it a little closely in order to find out where the flaw really existed. Was it in the method, or was it in the machine—was it in the Legislature itself, or was it in the Executive? The Scottish Fishery Bill was a measure which Scottish Members in all parts of the House were anxious to see passed into law. They were willing to make sacrifices of their own views; they were willing, even, to accept a measure less perfect in many respects than, in their opinion, it might have been, in order that the important interests to be affected by that Bill might receive the attention which was undoubtedly their due. But no sooner was the Bill introduced to the House than it was seen to be an infant that could not live. It lingered on during the summer months. By heroic measures the Secretary for Scotland was able to get it through Committee as a non-contentious measure, and it went to the House of Lords. No sooner did it go there than the monstrous deformity of the production was recognised in the land that was to be affected by it. Numerous deputations came up from most influential towns in Scotland, and implored Parliament to reject the measure which was going to do them such an injustice. It was well known that the measure was not rejected, but returned to the House for consideration—consideration which the Government refused to give it, and they dropped the measure. But the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland surely would not have the hardihood to mention the Scottish Fisheries Bill as an example of the neglect of Scottish business in the House. There was nothing to prevent the measure passing last Session except its inherent imperfections—except its inherently unworkable nature. The next time the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland left his native country and crossed the border to go to Scotland he would find that it was notorious there, amongst all the persons who might be affected by the Bill, and

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who were interested in its passing, that it was lost, not on account of proceedings in the House, not on account of obstruction or delays in the other House, but on account of the imperfection of the measure and of the obstinacy and, he was bound to add, the incompetency, of the Minister in charge of it. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would understand that he did not use the word "incompetence" in any but the most limited sense. The right hon. Gentleman's reputation in other fields was far too high for him (Sir H. Maxwell) to wish to attempt to put any slight upon it. He wished to be understood as restricting the observation entirely to the right hon. Gentleman's administration of affairs at the Scotch Office, on which he, at least, was unable to compliment the right hon. Gentleman. This seemed to him (Sir H. Maxwell) to be an instance of a Scottish Bill which, by the co-operation of the Scottish Members among themselves, might at this moment have been an Act of Parliament had it been workable. It was the defects of the measure, and not the opposition in either House, that put an end to it. But he did not see, for his part, how the Bill could have proceeded any further, even if it had been referred to the Grand Committee. The same obstacles would have arisen; the same defects would have been fatal to its existence, and the only result would have been that the Scottish Members would have been asked to do double the work of the English and Irish Members, with nothing to show for it in the end. They protested against the proposed increase of their labours when, as they maintained, there was no cause for it. They did not grudge their labour. They had put their hands to the plough, and were not to be blamed if they demurred to the demand to put their feet on the treadmill. As to the other and larger consideration, the bearing of this proposal upon the character of the Imperial Parliament, the House was asked to assent to a compromise couched in the modest and unobtrusive garb of an amendment of procedure, but it was, in fact, a vital and serious change in the constitution of the House. A very similar proposal was made in the year 1882 when the Grand Committee were first set up. Mr. O'Donnell proposed that an Irish Grand Committee

should deal with exclusively Irish affairs, and that proposal was dealt with by the then Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) in the following words :—

"The hon. Member invited the Government to sanction at this moment the principle that certain Imperial powers—the powers of the Imperial Parliament—should be exercised by Members taken exclusively from one part of the United Kingdom. I greatly doubt whether Parliament would ever sanction anything of the kind. For this House to divide itself in the manner proposed would be an extraordinary and unnecessary innovation, and an innovation which the House will not, I think, under any circumstances be prepared to entertain. We are proposing to the House, and we are bound to the Rules of our proposal, arrangements of mutual practical convenience. Therefore, how can we possibly accede to the Amendment—which, to say nothing else, involves an enormous Constitutional innovation."

The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland had used almost identical words in proposing the Resolution. The late Sir George Campbell in 1888 proposed the establishment of a Scotch Grand Committee for the same purpose as that of the Committee which was now proposed to the House. The Gladstonian Party had at that time accepted the policy of Home Rule for Ireland, and therefore it was not surprising to find that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, being still in opposition, yielded to the temptation to give his verbal sanction to the proposal, which was opposed by the Government of the day. The right hon. Gentleman, however, did not vote in favour of the proposal. His right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had shown what a wide departure from the immemorial custom of the House in the appointment of Committees was involved in the proposal of the Government in one respect, but had not touched upon the departure from the principle upon which Grand Committees were originally established. Grand Committees were usually composed of 60 Members selected from all parts of the House impartially by a Committee of Selection, and to them were added 15 Members in the character of experts. Under the proposal of the Government the system would be exactly reversed. The Committee would consist of 72 Scotch Members to deal with Scotch affairs, with 15 nondescript Members added in order to dilute the too exclusively Scotch nature of the proceedings. This was an extreme

instance of what grammarians termed a *husteron proteron*—putting the cart before the horse. So far from carrying out, as the right hon. Gentleman said, the system upon which Grand Committees had always been appointed, it was an exact reversal and a sharp departure from those lines. The Grand Committee had been spoken of as a microcosm reflecting the House of Commons. How could it reflect the House faithfully, or how could it in any degree be a microcosm reflecting the House when the balance of Parties in it would be so absolutely dissimilar and disproportioned? The very structure and furniture of the Chamber in which they were assembled, and of the Chamber in which the Grand Committee would sit, were designed to carry out the idea of government by Party. He could quite well understand the desire of the English Members to escape discussion upon Scottish affairs. He could, however, tell them how this had been done in the past and how it might, with perfect ease, be done in the future. Almost his first experience in the House of Commons, 14 years ago, was that of being placed on a Select Committee, presided over by the hon. Baronet the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Sir C. Cameron). It was a Committee on a subject in which he thought most English Members did not take an ardent interest. The subject was the herring brand. The Committee despatched its business upstairs in three or four days, and subsequently the Bill passed through the House without a single Amendment in Committee. That was the way in which they were accustomed to transact Scottish business, and it was the way in which it seemed they might transact it now. It was very often boasted that we were a businesslike people, but it seemed to him that they would be adopting a very curious method of dealing with business if they accepted the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. There were, of course, numerous differences between the procedure and the character of the Scotch and English peoples. Their laws were different, their churches were different, their agricultural tenure in many respects was different, and there were many other points of difference, but they were perfectly capable, acting as reasonable men, to settle their own affairs among themselves in the way

they had been accustomed to. The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter), who shook his head, would recollect one of the most portentous measures, in point of size, ever brought into the House—the Scottish Burgh Police Bill—a measure of upwards of 600 clauses. How was that Bill dealt with?

MR. R. T. REID: How long did it take?

SIR H. MAXWELL said, the hon. Member asked him how long it took. He would reply by asking why did it take so long? It passed through the mill of a Select Committee of Scotch Members upstairs, and that was a kind of mill which, though it ground small, did not grind as slowly as might be supposed. It came down to the House in a perfectly workable form. It was then opposed by Mr. Caldwell, who put down an impossible number of Amendments. Of course, Mr. Caldwell might have done just the same in a Grand Committee.

An hon. MEMBER: He was a Unionist.

*SIR H. MAXWELL said, he failed to see the relevancy of the interruption. He was endeavouring to speak of this matter in no Party spirit, and he had merely referred to Mr. Caldwell as a Scotch Member. At all events, the tactics Mr. Caldwell pursued were successful, as he prevented the Bill passing that Session. Next year the Bill went through the Committee stage in all its enormous proportions, and passed through the House ultimately with perfect ease and with almost perfect satisfaction to the towns and burghs affected. Why were they to give up proceedings of this reasonable and friendly nature? What had come upon Scotch Members that they could no longer meet the Lord Advocate in friendly discussion? He was sure there was nothing in the demeanour or the character of the present Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) to render him unapproachable in a greater degree than his immediate predecessor, and he (Sir H. Maxwell) was quite willing to testify to the admirable results which had been obtained by the consultations which had been referred to. Of course, what really commended this proposal to the House was that it was a kind of half measure of Home Rule—a kind of halfway house. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Trevelyan) was not very long ago

somewhat an authority on halfway houses. He denounced them in no ambiguous language as undesirable and dangerous tenements, and declared, in phraseology which Members were not likely to forget, that for his part he would never consent to be a tenant of one of them. The times had changed, and here was the right hon. Gentleman offering for the occupation of hon. Members a halfway house between the present system of Imperial legislation in Scotland and Home Rule. The proposal, however, did not find very cordial acceptance. The Secretary of the Scotch Home Rule Association had written a letter to *The Times* and other public journals couched in terms not very amiable or very respectful towards Her Majesty's Government. He evidently objected to this halfway house, and did not think that half a loaf was better than no bread. He talked of this proposal as an extra time job which Her Majesty's Government were seeking to impose upon Scottish Members. He said—

"The Government either believe in Home Rule or they do not. If they do not believe in it they are playing a hypocritical, base part. If they do believe in it they are playing a mean, base, cowardly part."

This was rather an unfortunate alternative, and for his (Sir H. Maxwell's) part he preferred not to apply such terms to the present occupants of such exalted positions. It was obvious, however, from this letter and from the harsh expressions contained in it that the present proposal would not satisfy the Home Rulers in Scotland. The only reason which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian gave for accepting Sir George Campbell's proposal for a Scotch Grand Committee in 1888 was that it anticipated larger demands. If the proposal was not to do that, what reason was there for it? Why should they waste time upon a proposal which, the hon. Member for Caithness had given them to understand, was already unacceptable in lieu of a full measure? Scottish Members on his side of the House, for their part, objected to this "extra time job" altogether. They had no stomach for it. They did not desire to be relegated to a one-horse Parliament upstairs, turned into a kind of garret legislators, Parliamentary pariahs.

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in order that they might grasp a barren chimera of make-believe autonomy. They had been returned to this House as Imperial Members, and Imperial Members they intended to remain, in act as well as in name, until the people of Scotland decreed it otherwise; and he called upon—should he say the hospitality, the generosity, or the public spirit of Her Majesty's Government, to make suitable and decorous arrangements for the transaction of their national business.

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) said, the only objection he had to the hon. Baronet's speech was that he had made precisely the same speech against the proposal of Home Rule for Scotland. He thought he even recognised some of the extremely well-turned phrases as having been used by the hon. Baronet to denounce the denationalisation of his country; and such speeches had been made by gentlemen like the hon. Baronet against every proposal to facilitate the passing of Scotch Bills and the transaction of Scotch business. There was not a gentleman who had regard for his own character for candour who would deny that during the past 18 months the business of Scotland had been disgracefully neglected, and any candid man would admit that that neglect had been continuing for the six years which preceded the present Parliament. As an illustration he would mention the Burgh Police Act of 1891, containing about 700 clauses, which had been brought in for 10 successive years by the Government of the day, and, having reached a certain point, had been abandoned. Was that the pace at which the hon. Baronet desired to see legislative progress? He would take another case, that of Mr. Mc'Lagan's Bill referring to liquor. He voted for the Second Reading of that Bill in 1884, but he had never had another opportunity of doing so, although in the interval Scotch Members had been diligently endeavouring, by combination and otherwise, to bring that Bill forward again, so that they might have an opportunity of voting upon it. Scotch Members did not succeed in getting Bills through because their measures were objected to, thwarted, and blocked at every stage by English Conservative Members, who thought they had a

prescriptive right to do so. The fresh proposal of the Government was due to the pressure of Scotch Members. Nearly every unofficial Member for Scotland, in August, 1892, presented, in deferential terms, a request to the late Prime Minister for this Committee, but that representation was treated with complete indifference—he was almost going to say contempt. Then at the beginning of this year they unanimously passed other Resolutions, but the note of deference was absent. They said that it was the duty of the Government to press forward Scotch business, and that unless the Committee were granted all prospects of Scotch legislation were illusory. To that language they adhered. He was satisfied with the Committee proposed by his right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland, who had always been most sympathetic and most desirous to push forward Scotch business; and he must say that although his right hon. Friend did not care for it, he, himself, with other hon. Members, was pained by the expression by the hon. Baronet, in a tone not often heard from him in the House, towards the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland. At the same time, he thought the proposal might have been better. It might have provided for the Second Reading also, and it might have omitted the 15 additional Members. What objection was there to the proposal as made? The Resolution retained the absolute control of the House over all Scotch business, and admittedly Scotch Bills would be committed to the most qualified people that could be imagined, for their consideration. Only one stage out of five was to be relegated to the Scotch Committee. Undoubtedly, the Committee stage was committed under this Resolution to the most qualified people. It was absurd to suppose that an ordinary Grand Committee was satisfactory in dealing with special matters relating to Scotch business. Hon. Gentlemen opposite objected to Home Rule, and to this Grand Committee; what did they propose themselves for the purpose of furthering Scotch business? It was notoriously the case that throughout the different constituencies in Scotland hon. Members opposite went about and complained of the inability of the Liberal Government

to pass measures. That was the theme that had been harped upon in his own constituency and elsewhere. Was it generous or manly to adopt that course, when every attempt was being made to relieve Parliament of a congestion of business? It was unworthy of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and would not have been done except under stress of Party politics. He had observed the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London; he did not know whether it was intended to destroy or merely to supplement the terms of the Resolution, but the hon. Baronet raised the question whether this Committee would apply to Scotland alone, or whether it was also to be extended to England and Ireland. He would like to know, in the first place, whether it was the case that English Members desired it? If they did not desire it, they surely could not complain if it was not extended to them. If they did desire it, for his part he thought it would be the grossest possible unfairness to refuse it to them. The fact was, that the House was a composite body, representing various countries, and the hon. Baronet was not alone in regarding himself from a cosmopolitan point of view as regarded the constituencies of the United Kingdom; but there were special interests, and Members from Scotland protested against being constantly overridden by a majority of gentlemen who really did not know the circumstances of the case, and who did not listen to the Debates. What they really wanted was not, at the present moment, any interference at all with the constitution of the House, but merely machinery by which, in one stage alone, the business of a particular part of the House, which had been sadly neglected for many years, should be accelerated and put into proper shape. There was authority of a very high order for the proposal the Government had made. The late Sir T. Erskine May, whom many hon. Members would remember, wrote an article in 1854 strongly recommending the Grand Committees, and exposing the great evils which had arisen from the congestion of Parliamentary business. He reprinted in 1881 this most interesting article, with a letter addressed to the hon. Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone), in which he said—

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"I have long been persuaded that useful results cannot be obtained from the abounding talents, industry, and public spirit of so numerous a body as the House of Commons without a careful division of labour amongst its Members. To this principle I first adverted in 1854, and I have since enforced it on numerous occasions before Committees of Inquiry. Should this principle be carried out, the House would relieve itself from that exhausting pressure of public affairs which tends to impair its credit and efficiency, while its Members, instead of being weighted with tedious Debates and irksome walks through the Division Lobbies, would find scope for their special talents in labour more congenial to their tastes, and more conducive to the public good."

Then he quoted a sentence from the late Lord Ossington, saying that what had been most honourable service had become intolerable slavery. That was, he thought, the position of hon. Gentlemen in this House now, who were expected to spend their time in cheering Ministers or ex-Ministers, and in marching through the Lobbies when their own business was pressing, which he regarded as useless and most irksome labour. This was a mere business proposal which was, however, most important to enable them to get their work done. It was not a Constitutional question of any importance at all. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] Hon. Gentlemen were very sensitive about Constitutional questions—he referred particularly to the Liberal Unionists; but did they remember the readiness with which they offered self-government to Ireland in any form except that of Home Rule—that extreme anxiety for the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament? Scotchmen did not ask for Home Rule at present; they were going to ask for that to-morrow; they only asked now for an amendment of the proceedings in one of the five stages in the House of Commons. But the truth was, any stick was good enough to beat a dog with. The Unionists opposed the proposal because they wished to be able to say at the next General Election that the Liberals were able to do nothing for Scotland. Many Members opposite were, no doubt, sincere in their opposition, but he believed that gentlemen on the Liberal Unionist Benches were cheering with their tongues in their cheeks. They knew very well that the dangers to be apprehended from the proposal were extremely small, and their desire was to stop legislation in order to

manufacture not quite candidly a cry throughout the country.

*MR. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) said, that there were certain considerations upon which this proposal was based that he, for one, could not pass by as trivial or unimportant. It was said that the business of the House was congested, that the House was overwhelmed with business, and it was also said that Scotch business had been neglected. He did not deny that there was some force in these considerations, but they had been exaggerated. In one sense Parliament had more time, because the great Party controversial questions had been settled, but there were social questions of equal importance to those great controversial questions, and in respect of those questions progress had not been so rapid as he would like to see it. To assist progress, therefore, he did not think the present proposal should be passed by without serious consideration. If he were asked what Scotch business was neglected he should say that it was Private Bills. The proposal had much to recommend it—it would not involve any revolution, or even a General Election, and he was, therefore, not prepared to pass it by without careful consideration. It had been objected to by the Leader of the Opposition, but though he proposed to vote with that right hon. Gentleman he did not take that course for quite the same reasons. It was not so much against the traditional custom of the House as it at first might appear, because at present Scotch business was practically left to the discussion of Scotch Members; at present they practically had as much as they would have under the Regulation they were now discussing. He would remind the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigtonshire that the traditions and customs of the House, as a whole, would not be interfered with, for there would be the introduction stage, the Second and Third Reading and Report stages, on which the House would be able to discuss the subject-matter of Scotch Bills. The most serious objection he had to the proposal was the fact that it was confined entirely to Scotland. It was the essence of his position that the treatment to be accorded to the legislation of the four countries should be the same all round, and he could not assent to any plan which did not place all the countries on the same footing in that respect. He also objected

to the proposal on the ground that the Scotch Committee would show a complexion of Parties different from that existing in the whole House, for there would be an overwhelming majority of Gladstonians in it. He also objected to it, because in the present Parliament Scotch Members had not been returned upon any local questions, but upon broad general issues. He did not say that Scotch business was not neglected in the House. He did not justify the Amendment on that ground, or on the ground that the House was overcrowded with business. He did not argue that Scotchmen knew their own business better than other sections of the House. The theory he maintained was that in this House they were not Scotchmen governing Scotchmen, or Englishmen governing Englishmen, but Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen legislating for the United Kingdom. Much legislation had been passed for Scotland with the aid of English votes which had been greatly to the advantage of that country, and which, in some cases, had been far ahead of sentiment in England. He might refer, for example, to the question of Church patronage. Scotland was placed in a satisfactory position in regard to that subject long before English opinion was ripe on the subject. The Law of Hypothec had been abolished in Scotland, whilst the Law of Distress still existed in England. These examples were enough to illustrate his point, although, if necessary, he could adduce many others. He would also point out to the House that English legislation—the legislation which had marked the course of the history of England for 40 or 50 years—had been markedly influenced by the presence in the House of the Scotch element. They had all been individually and collectively associated with that legislation, and it was his belief that the legislation bearing the marks of all sections of Members had been legislation which had greatly benefitted by the process. After giving the matter careful consideration he had been constrained to oppose the Resolution in its present form, in the hope that the matter might again come up in a form that might be acceptable to the majority of the Members of the House, as he believed it would be to the country. It contained the germ of an idea which, properly presented, might take the place of other ideas which had no chance of becoming law, and which, if they did,

would in their nature involve great perils and dangers to the Empire.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, it would be difficult to overrate the importance of this subject, which so closely affected not only the procedure but also the constitution and policy of the House of Commons. For his part, he would have been glad if the proposal of the Government presented a solution of some of those Parliamentary problems which many hon. Members must feel to be so perplexing, and he should have welcomed any practical alternative to some of those difficult constitutional suggestions which had been made, having for their object the elucidation and, consistently with Imperial feeling, the enforcement of local views and opinions. Personally, he had strong prepossessions in favour both of local government and local legislation. He did not entertain the fears which possessed many on this subject. On the contrary, he thought that much of our lost legislation, and certainly a very large portion of our public liberty, had emanated from that local action of our Municipalities, which was one of the most characteristic features of the history of this country. Under the influence of this feeling some years ago, and before the adoption of the new Parliamentary system of Grand Committees, he proposed, at a meeting of his own Party in the Foreign Office, a resolution in favour of devolution of that character, and he was convinced by experience that what was then needful was much more needful now owing to the great pressure of Parliamentary work, and also that such necessity was one that would probably greatly grow. He might be allowed to say that he practised the principles which he advocated because he had taken part in the administration of the Grand Committees of both Trade and Law. He had taken charge of a Bill through the latter, and when many of his Party thought it their duty to withdraw on the Employers' Liability Bill he had not done so. So he spoke from some experience. The result of that experience had been to convince him that the Standing Committees were useful and successful, and he looked forward almost as a matter of necessity to the development of that class of work in conducting Parliamentary affairs. In fact, he believed it was absolutely necessary for the purpose of transacting Parliamentary business.

Parliamentary work was not always well done, and it was frequently not done at all; and though the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigton laid some stress on the difficulty of reconciling Party feeling with the procedure of Standing Committees, one of the things which recommended those Committees to him was that they generally dealt more with business and with practical details and less with Party politics than marked the House, or the Committees of the House. He also desired to ascertain and give weight to local and even to national feeling in legislation. The basis of good legislation, he thought, was to ascertain what were the national or the local requirements and then to adapt them to legislation in the Imperial Parliament. Therefore, he was of opinion that the system of Standing Committees not merely for Scotland, but for the whole of the United Kingdom, and for the purpose of facilitating the business of the House was absolutely necessary. He was not much overcome by the argument of the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigton, that Members who had served on Grand Committees or Select Committees during the day would be completely exhausted and unfit for further legislative work. The conclusion he drew was that the business, at any rate of Private Bills, ought not to be transacted at Westminster at all, but ought to be relegated either to Commissions or to the County Councils, or partly to one and partly to the other, and at a recent meeting of the Chamber of Commerce that view was strongly and widely expressed by unanimous resolutions—supported by all parts and parties of the Irish nation, Belfast, Cork, and Dublin, by Scotland, and by every part of England—in favour of that form of Parliamentary devolution. He thought also that there was something to be said for eliciting national and local feeling through a system of Standing Committees. It might be that such a proposal might at one time have been—indeed, it might be yet—an alternative to more drastic and less Constitutional proposals. He saw that the Attorney General shook his head. Well, the Scotch Home Rule Association had addressed the Members of the House urging that this Motion should be resisted, mainly on the ground that it was antagonistic to the proposal of Home Rule for Scotland. He thought there was a great deal to be said in favour of legis-

lation of this kind being transacted in Grand Committees, because the Grand Committees were subject to the immediate check of the Imperial Parliament: they were able to be controlled by the House if they deviated from their proper lines, and their Bills could be subjected at once to the influence of reason instead of to agitation outside Parliament. Therefore, he was strongly in favour of the greater adoption of the principle of devolution through Standing Committees; and of referring to these Committees Bills, whether relating to England, Scotland, or Ireland, in order that the details might be thoroughly thrashed out and practically dealt with. But to determine otherwise than that Bills referring to all parts of the United Kingdom should be so dealt with indiscriminately would be, as the hon. Member for Dumfries had said, a gross unfairness. If they did it for one part of the United Kingdom they must inevitably and justly do it for all. And at this point arose the practical difficulty of this proposal which, as he had candidly said, commended itself to him in some respects. He very much doubted whether there could be practically a geographical classification of Bills. He would take as an illustration of the difficulty the Scotch Sea Fisheries Bill of last Session. He had personally a very large interest in the fishing industry. He had devoted years to its practical and scientific aspects; but he was bound to say from his experience that that Bill could not be limited to Scotland. It had a more widely reaching effect; it affected the food of the community of all those islands. He had been surprised to hear the brand of herrings referred to in the course of the Debate as a local matter. Why, this question of brand had been the means of either closing or opening up to us the markets of the world. Take the illustration of the Baltimore fisheries in Ireland, in which, owing to a better and more scientific system of curing, the American markets which had been formerly closed were now open to fish from that locality. Surely, then, the brand was a matter of even world-wide interest. Whatever might be said of local fishing industries along the coasts, the seas were unlimited geographically, and English fishing vessels constantly intermixed in Northern Seas with Scotch fishing vessels. Again, in the application of

science, which was so essential to the fishing industry, in which such admirable work had been done by the Scotch Fishery Board, who had set a great example to the district fisheries committees in England, it was not a matter limited to Scotland only, but touched the fishing industry of the British Isles. Therefore, there was the greatest difficulty in drawing up a geographical classification of Bills. He granted that the Scotch Fishery Bill had been practically considered in a Scotch Standing Committee. He had been present in the House during the discussion; he had been greatly interested in the discussion; and had not found it Scotch business forbidding as was supposed, but had received a great deal of information. Notwithstanding that, he felt that if he had taken part in the discussion it would have been an intrusion, and practically the subject was limited in discussion to the Scotch Members, though it certainly affected English and Irish fishing interests to a very great degree. He granted, too, that discussion on Scotch Bills had been unduly pushed into corners of the House; many times towards the close of the Session, sometimes between stages of the Appropriation Bill, there had been a Scotch discussion, and too frequently the House had been deserted except by Scotch Members, though the Bills under discussion affected the commercial and even the political arrangements of the whole of the United Kingdom. In the able speech of the Leader of the Opposition there was one consideration urged which should at least make them think before they too readily adopted this proposal, and that was the tendency it might have to emphasise separate national considerations. He had been sorry to hear the other day, and he was sure they all had been sorry to hear, an expression like that of "predominant partner." The very basis of the continuity of a United Kingdom was the principle of equality; and if they were to establish a Scotch Grand Committee to look after Scotch business, a claim would irresistibly be made on the part of England for a like privilege and advantage, so that, in order to cope with this difficulty of the moment, they might bring forward antagonistic interests, which it should be their duty to suppress. Besides that, they would have the difficulty of reconciling this deviation with the system of Party government, which, for good or

evil, had been set up in this country. Therefore, from these observations, he drew the conclusion that the very best measure of this character that could be proposed to the House was a plan applicable to each division of the United Kingdom. He refused, if he could help it, to make any new departure in favour of one portion of the United Kingdom, to the comparative disadvantage, or even the appearance of comparative disadvantage, of another. He had learned a lesson in that respect from Irish local government—a lesson which he recalled with very great regret. Ireland was told—and the co-operation of Irish Members was obtained on the faith of the promise—that as soon as England had been provided with local government, Scotland and Ireland should follow. The words that were used from the Conservative Treasury Bench on the subject—words which he had constantly reiterated on public platforms with approval—were “simultaneity and similarity”; but though England had received local Government in its fulness, though Scotland had received it in part, and it was now proposed to give it to her completely in the present Session, yet Ireland, where the existing system of local government could not be defended, had been kept at a constitutional disadvantage compared with other parts of the United Kingdom. Believing, as he did, that in treating with our various nationalities the only possible standing-ground was the standing-ground of equality, he thought that to make any new departure in favour of one branch which might possibly be resented by the other branches was a mistake, except it formed part of one consistent and complete plan, and it would lead to greater disadvantages than those which now undoubtedly existed in relation to Scotch business in the House. Those were reasons that influenced him to vote against the proposal of the Government, in which, as he had explained, he saw some good. The proposal was not a complete solution of the difficulty, but it might be, notwithstanding, some solution of the existing evils. On the other hand, he was convinced that in its present form it contained elements of danger and would lead to considerable disadvantages. If hereafter some joint, equal, and consistent plan of the character he had sketched, based on national feeling,

and giving national machinery to work it out, should be proposed, then, if it did not impair the relations between the different branches of the United Kingdom, if it gave facilities for the transaction of Parliamentary business, for which there was so much need, and was conducive to useful legislation, it would have from him at any time, and from whatever quarter or Party it came, the most ready consideration and such support as he could possibly give to it.

MR. CRAWFORD (Lanarkshire, N.E.) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken gave in the early portion of his speech extremely strong arguments in favour of the Motion before the House; but later on the hon. Gentleman adduced various considerations which would lead him to vote against the Motion. It was the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's speech which induced him to offer a few observations on the Motion which he had not otherwise intended to do. The hon. Gentleman had said he was in favour of devolution in the particular form of Grand Committees, but dissented from the present application of the principle, because it was not possible to proceed on geographical lines. He ventured to differ from the hon. Gentleman in the observation. He insisted that geographical classification of Bills was possible, and that in the case of Scotland it was desirable, because the laws and local institutions of Scotland were totally different from those of England; and accordingly to deal with Scotch legislation in detail—that was, in Committee—Members should be conversant with the laws and institutions of Scotland. That was a very good reason for a geographical derivation. The hon. Gentleman referred to the expression which was used by the Prime Minister about the “predominant partner,” and said it was an expression which they all regretted. He certainly did not regret the use of the phrase referring to the “predominant partner.” It was an expression which he entirely endorsed. The reason why a Committee for Scotch affairs was necessary was because England was the predominant partner. It was mere cant to deny that she is so. How was she the “predominant partner?” In votes. As the French said, “Victory is given to big battalions,” and accordingly the time of the House was allotted

to those who had an enormous preponderance in votes, the others being squeezed out. That was the reason why they had to complain of the preponderance of the great partner—it was not because of any ill will exhibited towards Scotland by the English Members. The Scotch Members co-operated with the English Members in the most cordial manner, but they found that the result was one arrived at on arithmetical principles. Where there were six or seven Members to one, the latter got proportionately only about one-seventh part of the time. The time at the disposal of the House was not sufficient for its present business, and that practically meant that Scotch business was squeezed out altogether. Doubtless, no one could shut his eyes to the fact to what was candidly stated by the Secretary for Scotland in moving his Motion—namely, that the Motion proposed to a certain extent what was an anomaly—that was to say, it proposed to establish a Standing Committee for Scotch business, but did not propose to set up similar Committees for English and Irish business. So far as Ireland was concerned, it stood on a very different footing to Scotland. But so far as England was concerned he would ask the House and the country to look at this question in a practical manner. If the proposal were likely to damage the English Members of the House in the smallest degree it could not possibly be carried, and, indeed, would not have been proposed. It could not, however, damage the English Members. No one could say that it would reduce their chances of getting their business transacted. When the Members from one part of the Kingdom were in the proportion of six or seven to one in regard to those from another part of the Kingdom, whereas the larger body could out-vote and impose their will upon the smaller body, whether these liked it or not, the reverse process was not possible. The English Members had nothing to fear from the influence of the Scotch Members. No instance could be adduced in which English opinion had been outvoted by the force of Scottish votes. He, therefore, asked the House to treat this as a practical matter. While the Scotch Members asked for it, and claimed it as a necessary means of getting their work done, he would even on a separate

ground ask the House to assent to the Motion—namely, as a further step in the process of devolution, and as a practical experiment which could be taken without risk to any section of the House.

*SIR M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he could have wished that the precedent set by the late First Lord of the Treasury had not been followed on this occasion—namely, that of bringing on very important Scotch matters on a Monday—on what was practically the opening day after the Easter Recess. It was rather hard to expect all Scotch Members to be in their places early on Monday afternoon. He himself had been unfortunate enough not to have heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland. Therefore, he spoke under some disadvantage, not having heard the initial part of the Debate. But there were questions connected with the proposed Grand Committee which must strike an humble Member like himself as being most important to be thoroughly considered in the House before being passed. In the first place, he could not see what real object was to be gained by carrying on the Grand Committee. Speaking from a Unionist point of view, in this Parliament there would be, with the addition of the 15 English Members to be added to the Committee, a majority of 57 against 30, and discussion would, therefore, proceed in Grand Committee on a Party basis. Downstairs in the House they were, however, able to take a less partisan view. The Government must not imagine that they had got the whole mind of Scotland in their favour because their supporters were pledged up to the hilt to vote in certain directions. The minority were not so pledged, and upstairs, in this proposed Grand Committee, they would have little chance of shaping matters in the way they desired. The result would be that there would be in the House longer Debates on Report and Third Reading stages. There would, therefore, be no economy of time effected. He had been a Member of the House for some years, and his experience had been that when it was sought to curtail discussion by methods which were not considered fair, discussion was not curtailed, but extended, for they derived less advantage from the views of gentlemen whose minds were unprejudiced. If the Resolu-

tion were carried, he predicted that instead of their having amicable relations upstairs, there would oftentimes be extreme bitterness, and that was not the way to provide for good legislation on any given subject. It was said that the law of Scotland was so essentially different from that of England that it was almost impossible to explain it and carry measures in the House where they had so little room for discussion. But whose fault was it that they had so little room for discussion in the House? The Scotch Members opposite practically controlled the Government, and if they insisted they could get Scotch business taken; but they preferred to sit mute and acquiesce in whatever the Front Bench chose to propose. Then they came down and said, "We want all the Scotch Members to discuss Scotch measures upstairs." That was not what Scotch Members came to this Imperial Parliament to do. They came here because they were still a United Parliament, and were determined to discuss from an Imperial point of view all measures brought before them. They dreaded anything which would prevent that discussion. Though they might be told that that opportunity would still be afforded them on the floor of the House, his reply was that the discussion to which he referred should take place on initial stages of measures before men's minds were prejudiced. In the Committee Room upstairs men's minds would be fixed upon the carrying out of a certain policy as defined at the polls. It was before the minds of the majority were fixed that it was desirable to endeavour to persuade them to take the right view before they gave their casting vote. The hon. Member who had just spoken referred to the French saying that "victory was given to big battalions"; then why did not the big battalions of Scotch Members sitting behind the Government insist on victory on the floor of the House? Why were they afraid to meet their opponents in the open? Why did they want to go upstairs to a Committee Room? Did they really expect that the Unionist Members were going to fall into this trap? Did they think they were going into a Grand Committee Room to be out-voted upon every question? Were they, for instance,

going to consent to a measure for Scotch Disestablishment being discussed in the Grand Committee which the Motion proposed to establish without the country having a chance to express an opinion upon it? The votes of English Members were overridden every day by the Scotch Members behind the Government. The latter overruled, for example, almost every important vote that was given by English Members upon the Parish Councils Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill. They followed their Leaders; but now they turned round and insisted on having it their own way in Scotch legislation as well. The Amendment of the Member for the City of London was more to the point than the proposal of the Government. If they were to be treated in this way in Scotland, England should be treated similarly; also Ireland. To single out Scotland for exceptional treatment would not expedite business, nor would it be for the good of the country. The proposal would be most unfair for the House, for the country, and for the Government. The Front Bench men would have to attend to business in the House and be absent, so the Grand Committee would suffer. If, on the other hand, they stuck to their duties in Committee, would not Imperial interests suffer? He could not see that any considerable amount of time would be gained by its adoption. It would be opposed to the spirit of our Constitution, while the amount of bitterness which would be engendered in the Committee Room upstairs was not likely to facilitate business there, nor smooth the course of legislation. On these grounds he should record his protest by opposing the Resolution, and he trusted that all Scotch Members who loved their country and wished to see its interests advanced would do the same.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee) said, the hon. Baronet who had just spoken had drawn a very gloomy picture of the results of the discussion and consideration of Scotch business by the Members for Scotland. In this he followed the hon. Member for Wigton, who seemed to think it should be a matter for complaint that there should be so many as 72 gentlemen whom he designated as experts on Scotch questions. In the appointment of Members to the Stand-

ing Committee on Trade, and also to the Standing Committee on Law, it had always been understood that the gentlemen were selected on account of their knowledge of trade, or legal questions; at all events, the predominating number of the Members of such Committees were placed on them, because they were considered specially qualified to deal with these questions, and it certainly seemed remarkable that the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigton should see so much that was objectionable in referring questions to be considered by Members who specially understood them. In the course of the Debate reference had been made to the great differences there were, not only in the laws of Scotland, but in the legal phraseology and in the customs and habits of the country. Well, Scotch Members should be, and no doubt generally were, specially versed in these differences, and able to deal with them. The hon. Baronet who had just spoken had also referred to the mischief likely to arise from these discussions on Scotch Bills upstairs. One of the great complaints on the Liberal side of the House was that they might introduce Bills year after year, but never have an opportunity of having them discussed. He was a comparatively new Member of the House, but he had brought in a Bill now for four successive Sessions. His misfortune in the Ballot was such that he had never been able to obtain a day when there was the least likelihood of the Bill coming on for discussion. He would just refer for a moment to the history of that Bill. It was one which proposed to abolish grocers' licences in Scotland. Years ago, between the '70's and the '80's, great complaint was made on the subject, and in the year 1878 a Royal Commission was appointed when the Party opposite was in power, with the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Ferguson) as its Chairman. It made a very full and minute inquiry, and a more able Report could not have been made than that which was drawn up by the Chairman, but from 1878 to 1890 no steps whatever were taken to carry out the recommendations made in that Report. He brought in a Bill largely with that purpose. There were two alternative proposals—one to abolish the licence entirely, and the other to carry out *simpliciter* the recommendations of the

Commission. This was the fifth year in which the Bill had been before the House, and there was not the least chance of it being brought on for discussion, hence his desire that some facility should be given for the discussion of such measures. They had heard a great deal about immemorial usage and ancient traditions, but he feared that other meanings were likely to be given to these phrases. They were in danger of drifting into immemorial uselessness, and, instead of perpetual talking about ancient traditions, he should like to see more of the modern transaction of business in a businesslike way. This continual talk, talking, accomplishing nothing, was beginning to excite a strong feeling on the part of many of their constituents. They had heard that this was a new departure. Well, they needed a great many new departures. Times had changed, and the House must change with them. It must adapt itself to the changed circumstances in which they were placed. He was glad to observe that the noble Lord now at the head of the Government, referring to the phrase which had been frequently used with regard to another House, that the time had come when it must either be ended or mended, said that that phrase had its application to the House of Commons as well, and it was true. There were many things in the House that needed to be ended. They must set themselves to ending some things and mending many others. At present the forces of obstruction were allowed much freer play in that House, owing to its ancient Rules and Regulations, than were the forces of construction. They needed more constructive ability, and less of this perpetual obstruction of every useful proposal. He had referred to one measure. There were many others. He would only name one. The people of Scotland throughout the length and breadth of the land had been interested for years in an amendment of the law with regard to rights of way, and Bills for amending the law had been before the House for the last dozen years. Just as an illustration of how much talk they had had, and how little work they had accomplished, he mentioned that in the last Session 49 Scotch Bills were introduced—not a few of them by Members on the other side of the House. Out of the 49, 41 were

dropped or withdrawn, and only eight received the Royal Assent. He was not so foolish as to say that the whole of the 41 were measures that ought to be passed, but he did say that there were amongst the Bills which were obstructed and with which no progress could be made a considerable number which, if they could have been referred to a Committee consisting mainly of Scotch Members, would have been passed to the advantage of the country. The time had come when a change should be made. They were continually told that proposals of this kind were calculated to affect the useful character of the Imperial Parliament. The greater number of the measures to which he referred were measures many of them of purely Scottish interest, some of them of comparatively local interest, the dealing with which outside the House would leave the House much more time for the consideration and discussion of great Imperial questions. The true way to aggrandise the Imperial character of Parliament was to devolve upon Committees or local Legislatures those sectional measures which only affected one part of the country. He hoped that they would really look to the transaction of business, and that they would have less and less talk and less and less obstruction. For that reason he would support this experimental proposal. Let them try it, and see whether it was not an improvement on the present state of things. His own belief was that it would be greatly to their advantage, and for that reason he would support the Motion.

MR. COCHRANE said, that the intricacies of Scottish law had been referred to, and it had been stated that one of the advantages of the proposed Committee would be that hon. Members who composed it would be conversant with these intricacies. Well, he himself had had a great deal to do with Scottish law, to the great advantage of the Legal Profession in that country. But as a Scotchman, and as representing a Scottish constituency, and as one who had had this opportunity of which he spoke, he could not pretend to a knowledge of any branch of Scottish law. Therefore, if this Grand Committee was to be composed of Members who had any knowledge of Scottish law it would become necessary for the hon. Baronet to move an Amendment

that there should be a technical examination to qualify Members before they could be permitted to take part in it. Once or twice reference had been made to the Scotch Fisheries Bill. It had been suggested that that Bill was an illustration of a Scotch measure which might be submitted with advantage to a Grand Committee. He was not prepared to dispute that, but he did not see why such a measure could not have been submitted to one of the ordinary Standing Committees. It had been said very justly that that Bill did not receive that amount of discussion when it came up for Second Reading to which a Bill of that importance was entitled. He quite agreed with that. The Bill came up at a late hour in the evening, and many Members who were interested in it would have liked to have had an opportunity for more discussion upon it. The remark which was made to him in the Lobby of the House was, that if he agreed with the principle of the Bill it was not necessary to discuss it, as the details had been thoroughly considered by the Government; but he thought they were all astonished that these remarks should have been made by the hon. Members who supported the Bill, when they found that the measure when it came to be discussed in another place was full of the most absurd and ridiculous provisions. He thought this Bill might quite as well have been discussed in an ordinary Standing Committee, and that any advantage which would have been derived from this Grand Committee would have been just as well derived from an ordinary Committee of the House. They had been told, and he believed properly so, that no Member could possibly attend the meetings of this Grand Committee and at the same time look after his business in the House of Commons. As a Scotch Member he protested against the making of such a fundamental change in their duties as would practically take place if the Scotch Members were relegated to a Scotch Grand Committee. The Scotch Members were in that House to deal not only with Scotch matters, but with English and Irish and Scotch questions. They were not sent there merely to deal with Scotch parochial matters, or with any Scotch question by themselves, but were entitled to be assisted by other intellects in the House, coming from every quarter

of the United Kingdom. He did not believe they had any mandate from their constituents to remove their affairs from the cognisance of the House and to take them to a Committee Room. It was an extraordinary Committee that was proposed under this Resolution. It was not in any sense a Committee such as they had seen before in that House. It was not a reflex of the opinion of that House; it was, in fact, neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. The Scotch Members would not have the entire control of the Committee; but 15 Englishmen, or Welshmen, or Irishmen, were to be put in to see, he supposed, that they did not misbehave themselves in Committee Room 15. Some speakers had said that these 15 Members would have but little influence upon their deliberations and Debates; but it had been said, also, that there were a great many questions upon which the Scotch Members would not be divided in the Grand Committee as in that House; but if they were very nearly divided, was it not a monstrous thing that these 15 other Members should be brought in to decide their questions? If they were to have a kind of Home Rule, let them have Home Rule, and not a kind of watered down Home Rule under which their opinions were to be set at nought by a small packed body of English, Welsh, and Irish Members. Another point which had been alluded to, and one which ought to weigh a great deal with them, was that if these Grand Committees were set up they would lose the support, and advice, and opinion of those who were most qualified to assist them in their deliberations. In the Cabinet there were some of the ablest of the Scottish Representatives, and there was no doubt they would not be able to give to the Standing Committee that attention which they were now able to give to Scottish affairs. The Grand Committee would be sitting at hours which would be inconvenient for them—say, from 12 to 4—when Ministers would be busy in their Offices, and they must either neglect business at their Offices or the work of the Grand Committee. They would not only lose the advice and assistance of these gentlemen, but of the Scottish Members representing English constituencies—the Leader of the Opposition, and many others who were as fully qualified to deal with these

matters as Scotch Representatives themselves. Then there was the question of the influence exercised by Scotch Members upon Imperial matters. There was no doubt that they exercised a great deal of influence, and, he hoped, in the right direction, but they would be withdrawn from much of that if they were to be sent into this Grand Committee. He believed there was a stronger Liberal feeling in Scotland than in England, even among the Unionists, and that their votes upon English questions had had a good effect, such as in the case of the Parish Councils Bill, where votes were given by Scottish Members upon a matter of principle. This was a great privilege that Scotland possessed, and one which ought not to be taken away from it. No doubt if they went away the English Members would say they were glad to get rid of them, and ask why they should take an active part in English affairs at all. Why the number of 15 English Members was selected it seemed difficult to account for. The Secretary for Scotland never gave them any reasons why he selected 15 in preference to any other number, and he thought they were entitled to some explanation from him. As to the measures being principally for the relief of Scotland, it was difficult to see how they could determine that certain measures should only refer to Scotland. They might have a Registration Bill before the Committee, and they might have an Amendment moved extending the suffrage to females. They might say that it only affected Scotland directly, but it would indirectly affect the policy of the whole country. He did not see how the fact that they were going to deal with Scottish affairs in this Grand Committee would place more time at the disposal of the English Members. They were told by the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries that only one-fifth of the Scotch Bills would be dealt with by the Standing Committee. If four-fifths of the time was still to be occupied in the House very little would be gained. It was his opinion that if the Secretary for Scotland had approached the Government, backed up as he would have been by 72 Scottish Members, all anxious to pass measures of a non-contentious character, that he would get more attention from the Cabinet than at the pre-

sent time, and that they would accomplish their business more satisfactorily than under this proposal for a Grand Committee.

MR. J. WILSON (Govan) said, that if they were to have a mandate from their constituents for everything done in that House they would never be done with matters, and he thought the less they heard about mandates from their constituents the better. They were sent there by their constituents to do the best they could, and to lend their minds to the consideration of the subjects that came before them in the best interests of the country. The Member for Kirkcudbright twitted them that, now that they had a Liberal Government in power, they did not trust that Government. He (Mr. Wilson) was reminded that the Member for the College Division (Sir C. Cameron) had had on the Paper for the last seven or eight years a Bill that had passed the Second Reading in this House, for the purpose of the early closing of public-houses. Such a Bill was passed in this House, but the other House took out of the Bill all towns above 50,000 inhabitants. His hon. Friend had endeavoured year after year to get his Bill passed, and every Municipality had petitioned in favour of the Bill; but this House, so far as the Opposition were concerned, had turned a deaf ear to these representations. So long as Scottish Members were there they ought to be allowed to pass their own social legislation. He hoped that, whatever was done, the House would see the propriety of giving something to the Scottish Members. He hoped their backbones would always stiffen, and, if the House did not give them what they wanted, that they would go a step further, and, like their Irish friends, maintain that they must settle their own affairs in their own country. His constituents and the great body of the people of Scotland said that the Scottish Members were not carrying out the purpose for which they were sent there, because there had been no legislation for Scotland worth speaking of.

*MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's, &c.) said, it appeared to him that his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfries (Mr. R. T. Reid) was guilty of something like misrepresentation when he charged those who sat in that quarter of the House with performing at one time the difficult physical function of cheering

with their tongues in their cheeks, and opposing measures of this kind in order that they might, from insidious motives, be enabled at some later period to quote the neglect of Scottish business against the Government of the day. He entirely disclaimed any such intention in opposing the Resolution of the Secretary for Scotland, and he did not think it lay in the mouth of his hon. and learned Friend to charge those who took the course they did on the Sea Fisheries Regulation Bill of last year—a course acknowledged by the Secretary for Scotland as being one of great forbearance—it did not lie with the hon. and learned Member to make so unfounded and unwarrantable a charge against them. It appeared that most of his hon. Friends representing Scottish constituencies, and especially those of them who, with some lack of enthusiasm, had supported this heroic remedy, entirely ignored the magnitude of the Constitutional change which was proposed by the Resolution. It seemed most anomalous that that Resolution should have been advocated, in the first place, by the present Secretary for Scotland, and, in the second place, by the right hon. Baronet the Member for East Denbighshire, both of whom were Members of the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, which was responsible for the initiation of the principle of devolution to Standing Committees. In the Debate which followed upon the Resolution of the late Prime Minister, in 1882, Sir Richard Cross challenged the Prime Minister as to whether he meant that his system should apply to measures relating to parts of the United Kingdom such as was now proposed by the Secretary for Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, interrupting Sir R. Cross, said with some vehemence—

“I never used such an expression, or intimated such an idea, that Scotland should be allowed to discuss its affairs by itself.”

Later on, in reply to another interruption, the right hon. Gentleman said it would be absurd to make any connection between these local matters and the Grand Committees. He (Mr. Anstruther), therefore, understood that the Grand Committees were advocated, in the first place, to devolve upon a section of the Members of the House the duty of considering in detail measures which were non-content-

tious, and which, it might be fairly expected, would be dealt with solely with reference to their merits, and, in the second place, that these measures should be general in their application, although special in their character. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), in the course of the Debate on the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, said he would advocate the division of the whole House into panels, on the condition that each should be a perfectly true miniature of the House itself. Did the Resolution of the Secretary for Scotland comply with any of these three conditions which had been universally accepted? The Secretary for Scotland had not mentioned, with the exception of the Local Government Bill, what were the measures which it was the intention of the Government to refer to the Standing Committee of Scottish Members. The proposal of the right hon. Gentleman was entirely at variance with the principles laid down by the late Prime Minister, and they had very high authority for condemning a proposal which should compel the Members for any Division of the United Kingdom to sit upon a Grand Committee by themselves. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfries had quoted the authority of Sir Erskine May; but he should be very much surprised to find that Sir Erskine May ever advocated a proposal which vitiated in three essentials the principles upon which Standing Committees had always been advocated and appointed. The late Mr. Forster, in 1882, only gave his consent to the Resolution of the Government on the understanding that the constitution of the Grand Committee should be fairly representative of the House. Was the Grand Committee proposed by the Secretary for Scotland a fair Committee? If this proposal of the right hon. Gentleman had been in operation in the last Parliament, they would have had a Committee consisting of 38 supporters and 49 opponents of the Government; while a fair constitution of such a Committee on the lines laid down for Grand Committees would have given the Government a majority of 15. Was this a fair Committee? He submitted to the House that the plan now proposed by the Government was not a fair one. But the right hon. Gentleman might have gone further. It so happened

that this Parliament was most favourable to the proposed plan, and it had a semblance of fairness about it. In the last Parliament the balance of the Parties in the House presented a somewhat different aspect than they did now, for the majority of the Scotch Members who would then have voted for the proposal would have been 14. The majority for the Government at the General Election of 1886 was 118 (394 against 277), the Scotch Members being 43 against 29, a majority of 14 against the Government of the day. If this remedy which the right hon. Gentleman expected to work so smoothly and from which he anticipated so little friction had been adopted in the last Parliament, the Scotch Committee would have consisted of 38 Members supporting the Government and 49 against—a majority of 11 against the Government, while the fair constitution under the Rules of the House (Standing Order 48) of the Grand Committee in 1887 would have been a majority of 15 in favour of the Government, so that the difference in reality would have been 26 in the whole. They had a still further means of testing how the principles proposed to be adopted by the Government were likely to prove fair in their application. Lord Rosebery had, in forecasting what the next Parliament would be, anticipated that he would have 385 supporters against 285 of the Opposition, and that the Scotch Members would be divided in the proportion of 62 to 10. According to that forecast there would be a difference of no less than 42 votes between the constitution of the Scotch Grand Committee, and a Grand Committee appointed under the present Standing Order. He thought he had shown conclusively that the proposal of the right hon. Baronet had not fulfilled the three main conditions under which Standing Committees had been on former occasions sanctioned by this House. They had been told that the proposal would commend itself to hon. Members on several grounds. It was said that there was no time given for the proper discussion of Scotch business. So far as his experience had gone during the time he had had the honour of sitting in the House, he had noticed that whenever Scotch Members had really a *bonâ fide* reform to bring forward they were met by the greatest consideration, and every facility for fully discussing the Bill was

given them. When, on the other hand, the measure put forward was merely a "log-rolling" affair, the Scotch Members competing with a number of other sections, the Government very justly and properly ignored it. In the last Parliament the Scotch Members supporting the Government represented a proportion of one-thirteenth of the whole Party; the proportion was in the present Session one-seventh, so that if they were unable now to induce the Government to give adequate time to the consideration of Scotch business, he could only say that either their influence or their importunity varied in an inverse ratio to their numbers. They had been told that evening with considerable hardihood by the hon. Member for South Edinburgh—who certainly had spoken with very considerable authority on Scotch matters—that he had been elected to represent a Scotch burgh for Scotch considerations first and Imperial considerations afterwards. He had seen also that another Englishman and Scotch Member, the Home Secretary, had thought it worth his while to go down to Berwickshire to influence Scottish affairs. It was noticeable that in his speech at Duns he referred to the fact that he had no local connection with the county he represented. He made no charge against the right hon. Gentleman, and was quite willing to agree that for the purposes of representing the political views of the majority of East Fife on Imperial questions the right hon. Gentleman's opinion and vote was not only as good as any other man's, but better than many might be. But how did that square with the argument that the Scottish Members were specially qualified by the fact of representing Scottish constituencies to deal with the details of Scottish business? For example, what had he as a constituent of the Home Secretary to thank the right hon. Gentleman for since the Election of 1892? There had been sent him a pamphlet containing reports of two speeches delivered by the right hon. Gentleman in the constituency between 6 p.m. on one Friday in October last and 11 p.m. on the following night, with a note regretting that the official duties of the right hon. Gentleman prevented him from visiting other portions of the division of East Fife which he had the honour of representing in Parliament, and presenting his constituents with copies of his

speeches. It was almost surprising he had not added "price 1d." He made no charge whatever against the right hon. Gentleman, nor did he allege that he was disqualified for that reason to represent the political opinions of the majority of the electors of East Fife in the Imperial Parliament; but such a position of affairs destroyed the argument that the Scottish Members elected as at present had special qualifications for dealing in a Standing Committee with the details of Scottish business. One other consideration only had been put forward in support of this proposal. It was urged that the decisions of such a body would come before the House when Bills came back from the Grand Committee backed by such authority that they would at once be endorsed without a word of comment or criticism. If that were the case, then there was no necessity for the proposed devolution; if, however, it was not the case, the minority of the Committee holding strong opinions might choose to raise the whole issue in the House upon the Report stage, perhaps overruling the decision of the Committee, and leading to greater delay not only in reference to Scotch measures, but in the general business of the House, than the right hon. Gentleman seemed to anticipate. He was opposed to the proposal which the right hon. Gentleman wished to thrust upon them, because he believed that it fundamentally touched the principles upon which any system of devolution had hitherto been advocated. It would be really forced upon them by a majority who did not pretend to have any interest in Scotch affairs, which they would rather prefer to manage for themselves in Scotland. If that should be necessary they would prefer to work under the ægis of St. Andrew, and not to have St. George wandering across the Border to interfere with them when they were perfectly competent to take care of themselves. If they were to shift for themselves under their own national emblem they should not be asked to provide political provender for others as well. The right hon. Gentleman might search to the bottom every system of devolution, and he would find that so far from conducing to the smooth conduct of Scottish business, this proposal would lead to greater friction and to even greater delay than that which the Scottish Members had now so much reason to deplore.

SIR J. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) said, he would make no comments upon the speech of the hon. Member for St. Andrews, but would say at once that he would vote for the proposal of his right hon. Friend with unalloyed satisfaction. He had listened carefully to the Debate, and there was no single result anticipated from this proposal by any hon. Member on either side which he should not embrace with gratification. The Leader of the Opposition said that the proposal would revolutionise the procedure of the House of Commons. As far as Scotch business was concerned, that was a consummation devoutly to be wished, and if the necessary consequence of the Motion must be that a similar Committee should be granted to England, he was prepared to accept that result. The sooner their procedure was revolutionised the better. But they were told in the same breath that England would turn and refuse the boon of an English Grand Committee for English measures.

SIR A. ROLLIT: Who said so?

SIR J. CARMICHAEL said, they had been told that it would be regarded as a most pernicious measure. He could understand that position, because English Members were in so large a majority that they already could be sure of controlling their own business if they felt strongly on any subject; but it would be rather acting like the dog-in-the-manger to refuse what was asked by the majority of Scotch Members on the ground that they did not want it themselves. The hon. Member for Central Leeds pointed out that if these Committees were established no Unionist Government would ever be able to legislate for Scotland, and no Radical Government could ever legislate for England, because in both cases the measures would be mutilated in the Grand Committee. That argument involved an admission that legislation was now forced on Scotland and England against the wishes of those countries, and surely it would be better that each country should wait for a sympathetic Government to legislate for it than to continue the present system. The House was also told that this Grand Committee was only the half-way house to Home Rule. If that were the case, again he would hail the result with great gratification. He would give his vote now in favour of Scotch Members managing their own business, and to-morrow for

their managing it in Scotland. Home Rule was, no doubt, looked upon by their Unionist Members with no great favour as being a disintegration of the Empire, but that fear reminded him very much of what happened in the days of Eli, who used to tremble for the ark of God.

*MR. A. G. MURRAY (Buteshire) said, it had been suggested that this Motion was constituted on the same lines as the Standing Committee which were provided for under Standing Order, No. 47, but he denied that there was any resemblance in the proposal of the Government to a Standing Committee as hitherto understood. It differed from them in three essential particulars. The principle now proposed was one of nationality, and the Committee was not kept primarily for non-contentious matters. Further, the Committee would not be like previous Committees with which they were acquainted. Again, unlike every other Committee, Grand or otherwise, with which they had been hitherto acquainted, it would not be in its composition like the rest of the House, divided between the Parties in the same proportion as in the House. Further than that, there was the point that this Committee was to apply to Scotland alone, and that so far as the intentions of the Government had been indicated there were not to be similar Committees for either England, Wales, or Scotland. That point had, however, been very admirably dealt with by the hon. Member for St. Andrews. He wished to call attention to the extraordinary proceeding of the Government in the conduct of the Debate. The Leader of the Opposition at a very early period of the Debate called attention to several very important principles which were violated by the proposal of the Government, and showed that, either by accident or design, the right hon. Gentleman who proposed the Motion kept out of view entirely the great Parliamentary change which it entailed and the far-reaching effect which would flow from that change. That speech of his right hon. Friend was delivered at 5 o'clock, and having listened to every speech since delivered, he had no hesitation in saying that there had not in the interval been the faintest shadow of an attempt to answer any one of the arguments of his right hon. Friend. He thought that the cat had been let out of the bag by the hon. Member for

Dumfries, when he said that the proposal originated, not in the views of the Government, but in the fact that the Scotch Members had been for some time making themselves somewhat unpleasant. Although they had a Cabinet bristling with Scotchmen, they had seen few of them that night. They had had a few transient visits from the Secretary for War, but where was the Leader of the House? He was, perhaps, closeted with his convictions and sympathies which in a gentleman like him, with his respect for Parliamentary traditions, were far away indeed from the Motion before the House. The points made with such clearness by the Leader of the Opposition were, first, that the Members of Scotch constituencies were not specially qualified above all other Members to deal with the details of Scotch measures, because they were elected not upon local but upon Imperial considerations; secondly, that the point of demarcation between measures was more often one between burgh and county rather than between England and Scotland; thirdly, that the definition of a purely Scotch question was impossible; fourthly, that the effect of passing this measure would be that you would inflict an insult upon England if you denied a similar measure to her; and, finally, that it would become quite impossible to carry on Government on the true and old Party lines, unless they had by accident that which they never had had—a general majority in Parliament represented by a majority of each of the four nations. He ventured to assert, without fear of contradiction, that these arguments of the Leader of the Opposition had been left unanswered. The Member for South Edinburgh, who was eminently qualified to give an answer, if it could be given, had only shown that the case for the Government was poor indeed. He had suggested the possibility of the Government being out-voted, and of finding himself fighting alongside the hon. Member for East Lanarkshire, but the picture of the Ethiopian changing his skin and the leopard its spots would only apply where they were dealing with measures which were truly non-contentious. His very argument was destructive of the proposition of the general plan. The only other argument he advanced was that they ought not to deal with the question of proportion, as that was an arithmetical fallacy. A majority was a majority, and

it did not matter whether it was proportionately large or small. He doubted if the hon. Member for Merionethshire would have subscribed to that theory on the previous Tuesday week. They also had a speech from the Member for East Denbighshire, who, referring to the Gaelic and Welsh tongues, talked about the brogue of Burns. He would like to say in reference to that—although he feared the observation might fall flat—that they might depend upon it that if Burns had a brogue, he wore it on his foot and not upon his tongue. The only argument that had been advanced on the Government side that night was that Scotch legislation in the past had not gone on so quickly as could have been desired, and that, therefore, a Grand Committee was necessary. But if quickness alone was desired, why have a Committee at all? Why not appoint a Committee of five of the Government's own supporters, or why not settle the business at a caucus at Dover House? The mere question of quickness did not grapple with the difficulties put forward by his right hon. Friend. He had pointed out that it was not proposed to form a similar Committee for England, but he would point out how English opinion had been borne down by Scotch opinion. The Secretary for Scotland said that a proper subject for consideration of the Grand Committee would be the Local Government Bill for Scotland. They had had the English Parish Councils Bill last Session, and he supposed that everybody would agree that one of the crucial points in Committee on that Bill was the Amendment of the hon. Member for Rugby. He had analysed the first Division on that Amendment, and he found that, whereas the Government had a majority of 46, if they deducted the Scotch and Irish Members from both sides, the Government would have been placed in a minority of 10. No doubt some hon. Members had had the courage of their opinions. The hon. Member for Dumfries had told them that he was willing, if necessary, to vote for equal treatment to England. But what did the Government say? The Government knew perfectly well that if they granted such a Committee for England the conduct of business in that House would, as the Leader of the Opposition had pointed out, be impossible. Then, as to the argument that Scotch Members were

specially qualified to deal with Scotch matters, he ventured to suggest that on legal questions the number so qualified would be very few. It was supposed that the House at large would have some control over Scotch measures, because under this proposal it would be master of the Second Reading stage. The Secretary for Scotland said he could not understand any apprehensions of direct interference by the Scotch Grand Committee with any English points or English principles. Direct interference! No. But surely he must know that there was an indirect action—that where a measure was passed for one country it was likely to repeat itself in another. The right hon. Gentleman convicted himself even on this point out of his own mouth, because he said there was a debt due to Scotland, and that debt was a Parish Councils Bill. Why? Because they had passed an English Parish Councils Bill. Whenever legislation embodying new principles were successfully passed for one Kingdom, sooner or later it would, he ventured to assert, have an influence on the other. England obtained free education sooner than it would otherwise have done simply because Scotland got it a year or so before. He could point to countless instances where the really important principle of a measure was raised in Committee and not on the Second Reading. For instance, important as were the principles raised on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill, he ventured to say that far more important points were raised in Committee on that Bill. That was proved by the very title of the Bill itself. It was not even called the Home Rule Bill; it was called “a Bill to amend the Provisions of the Government of Ireland,” and that might have meant anything. The really important points involving changes of Constitutional law were raised in Committee. He might mention other instances. There was the dissociation of taxation and representation, which would be involved in some Bills to come before them, but that point would have to be raised in Committee, especially in connection with the Registration Bills. The same applied to questions of the incidence of taxation as regarded real and personal property. Let them take this year’s Bills. He found that there were altogether 11 Scotch Bills, and out

of these he could find only one, or at most two, which did not seem to raise a perfectly general principle—a principle as applicable to England as to Scotland, and it would be out of the question to say that these principles would not be, and ought not to be, debated in the full House. Let them take, for instance, the Church of Scotland Reference Bill. That measure obviously raised a very important Constitutional question—whether there should be a referendum to the people of Scotland on the question of Establishment or not. Next came a Bill which was not general, inasmuch as it simply raised a question as to the expenses of County Councils; but then there was the Crofters’ Holdings Amendment Act, which proposed to extend crofter legislation to all leaseholds under £30. Was not that a general question which would have a far-reaching effect from one country to the other? There were also, among other Bills, the Bill for the abolition of grocers’ certificates and the Local Veto (Scotland) Bill. Surely these were not merely Scotch questions, but questions for the consideration of the entire Kingdom. Then there were the Mining Accidents Bill and the Bill dealing with the question of road subventions. On each of these Bills, if they were sent to a Grand Committee, questions of principle would arise proper for the discussion of the House in its full strength, and it would be a great pity if they were not debated by the whole House. The personal question could not entirely be left out of view. It had been conceded by some hon. Members opposite that the result of passing this Motion would be that some of the Scotch Members should not serve on any other Grand Committee. Speaking personally, however, he might say that he felt that if there was any way in which he could be of use on Grand Committees it would specially be in assisting the English Attorney General in amending the law of this country, by making to him suggestions for improvements borrowed from the more excellent law of Scotland. But under this plan he would not be able to do that. It would be a very great misfortune if they were deprived of the assistance, on Grand Committees, of several Scotch Members who now served most usefully and efficiently on them. There were, for instance, his right hon. Friend the Leader of the

Opposition, also one of the hon. Members for Ipswich, and the right hon. Baronet the Member for North-East Manchester. It might be suggested that they could be included in the 15 added Members, but it was not to be supposed the Committee would be composed exclusively of Scotchmen. It was, furthermore, said that there would be a certain amount of check in discussing matters upon Report; but, after the experience of last Session on the Employers' Liability Bill, he would have thought that nobody would be very much enamoured of discussing, upon Report, matters which had not been raised on previous stages. What was the proposed Scotch Committee going to do upstairs? If their decisions were going to be discussed at length and revised in the House afterwards, it would raise a truly national grievance, and he would object to go upstairs to take part in a mere Debating Society, instead of as at present conducting, with others, the Imperial business of that Imperial House of Commons. It might be said that there had been a great deal of delay in passing Scotch Bills, but during the late Government they managed to get through a good deal of Scotch legislation, and if so much had not been managed lately, he suggested that Scotch Members on the other side might make themselves a little more unpleasant. Some people liked to be wooed with blandishments rather than by rougher wooing. The experience of the Irish Members seemed to show that the Government preferred the latter kind. He really thought some way might be found for getting through Scotch business without adopting a measure which would work badly in itself and would certainly effect a dislocation of all their old ideas of Parliamentary procedure.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): My hon. and learned Friend began by stating that the Standing Committee proposed to be constituted was one in name, but not in nature. He spoke as if such Committees were in some sense sacred, and as if they had the advantage of great antiquity. But, as a matter of fact, the Standing Committees of the past 12 years were themselves an experiment, and in the discussions which took place in 1881 or 1882 many of the objections which we have heard to-night were raised. It was, however, quite the intention of the

House, unless my memory deceives me, that, if these Grand Committees proved successful, their range, operation, and utility should be extended, and the mere fact that this would be an additional Grand Committee is no reason against establishing it. I, therefore, cannot admit that argument of my hon. Friend. If the experiment is one that seems fit for extension there is no Parliamentary Rule or law why it should not be extended. In this case it may well be that nationality will form a guide for giving a range of subjects to be so dealt with. One of the matters which we had in view when these Grand Committees were first set up was that there should be a certain fitness, or assumed fitness, on the part of those who were invited to serve upon them for the particular subjects to which their attention was to be addressed. Accordingly, in setting up the Grand Committee on Law, a preponderating number of lawyers was placed upon it, and in the same way in connection with the Grand Committee on Trade, a large number of Members were selected who were supposed to have wide experience in trade and commerce. That principle at once constitutes a guide in forming a Grand Committee to deal with the special and peculiar affairs of particular nationalities. That is what we propose to do in this case, and therefore it seems to me that the argument of my hon. and learned Friend, so far as it is founded on precedent and Parliamentary practice, is not valid, seeing that all we propose to do is to make a moderate extension of a principle which is not in itself many years old. The next point of my hon. and learned Friend was that the original intention of appointing Grand Committees was that they should deal with non-contentious matters, by which I suppose he meant matters non-contentious in a political or Party sense. I suppose there never has been any Bill sent to these Grand Committees which has not raised very fair subjects of contention—contention, however, of a kind which I hope may be solved, and which often has been solved, by friendly and full and fair discussions. There are a great many such Bills applicable to Scotland, and I hope we are not so contentious that we fight politically about everything. I can hardly imagine a matter in which there is a better

prospect of the more satisfactory conditions which my hon. and learned Friend desires than the very example which has been mentioned to-night of the Parish Councils Bill. That is a measure on which the immense majority of the questions likely to arise are not, as far as I conceive or know, in the least likely to be contentious in a Party sense. But I am not prepared to admit that when a Bill has been read a second time, and the House as a whole has affirmed its general principle, the fact that some contentious matters may remain is a reason against sending it to a Grand Committee. If a Bill did involve matters of a character which were not fit for such a Committee the House need not send it to the Committee. I must remind the House that the proposal of the Government is not to require that all Bills should be sent to a Grand Committee. The proposal will leave it to the House to select such Bills as are fit in its judgment to be sent to such a Committee. These were the principal points my hon. and learned Friend stated as against the proposal to apply this very useful principle of Grand Committees to Scotch questions. I do not admit in the least that nationality, merely forming a guide or indication, may not be very useful as pointing the way to the Committee stage. If we look at this matter in a mere practical way, I am sure that all who have had the honour of carrying Scotch Bills through Committees of the whole House know that when a Scotch Bill gets into Committee, it resolves itself as a matter of fact into a Grand Committee of Scotch Members, and the discussion is conducted solely by Scotch Members. Some English and Irish Members have told me that they were quite unable to understand the phraseology of the Bills we were dealing with, and for that and other reasons they left us to ourselves. It is quite plain that there are very many Bills relating to Scotland, and to other parts of the country as well, with respect to which it is necessary that there should be a great deal of somewhat conversational discussion, and I do not at all share the feeling of my hon. and learned Friend, or it may have been some previous speaker, that if Scotch Bills were sent to a Grand Committee, instead of being left in a more peaceful atmosphere, such as he said reigns usually with the House, they would be in a more stormy atmosphere, such as he said reigns usually

in Grand Committees. My experience of Grand Committees is exactly the opposite. I do not profess to inquire into the reasons for it, but it does seem as if a Grand Committee is much more of a business body than the House itself. Therefore, that argument is not one which should deter the House from adopting this proposal if it otherwise commends itself. My hon. and learned Friend said the Government had not answered some of the arguments advanced by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour). I am quite sure that no one in this part of the House intended any discourtesy by that, and, of course, the answer will come in good time. I have tabulated the points which my hon. and learned Friend said were made by the Leader of the Opposition. He said, in the first place, that Members were elected not for local but for national purposes. Of course, I quite admit that Members are elected for national or Imperial purposes, but I utterly deny that they are not elected also for local purposes. They are elected for both purposes, and accordingly if a Member is going to fulfil the full measure of his functions he will take part in the discussion of Imperial matters in the House as a whole, and he will, in dealing with local matters, at least as appropriately take part in the discussion, and will do so more effectively, I think, in a body smaller than the House, and one which will give more attention to local interests. It would be quite a mistake to say that either class of interest was exclusive of the other. They both exist, and a Member would not fulfil his duties rightly unless he attended to both. The fact that a Member is elected for Imperial as well as local purposes is no argument against this method of devolution of the latter to a Grand Committee. Another point the right hon. Gentleman raised was as to the distinction between burgh and county Members. I must confess that I do not quite see what bearing that has upon the question. One of the great values of either a Grand Committee or the House as a whole is that they contain Representatives not of one type of constituency only, but of all types. The proposal is not to elect the burgh Members alone, or the county Members alone, but to elect them all. They would, therefore, be qualified to represent the country in all its aspects and all its interests. The

third point which my hon. and learned Friend said the Leader of the Opposition had taken was that there was no definition of what were Scotch subjects. The language used in the Resolution is "all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland." I do not think that is difficult to understand. You have only to read a Bill to see whether it relates exclusively to Scotland. If it does, it may be sent to the Grand Committee, and if it does not, it will not be so sent. But surely there is nothing in the definition to make it impossible, either by a ruling of the Chair, or—what is left quite open by this proposal—the determination of the House, to decide whether a Bill is fitted to be referred to such a Committee or not. The House is left the master of the reference, and if the House should, in its wisdom, think that a Bill does not relate exclusively to Scotland, it has the power to keep it. Another point raised by the right hon. Gentleman was that this would be adding insult to injury. I am quite sure that no one from Scotland has the least desire to speak with the least disrespect of England, but I do not in the least see how by offering to withdraw our presence or—

*MR. A. G. MURRAY: What was referred to was non-concession to England of the same provision.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: If England wants it, and gives the same evidence of a desire for it that Scotland does, England will be able to take it. I am not aware that there is any reason why, if England wants it, she should not have it. But I ask how can it be an insult to England, or to anybody else, to allow Scotland to settle the details of her own domestic affairs, and prepare them for the ultimate judgment of the House? Then the Leader of the Opposition said that discussions in Committee would be carried on upon Party lines, unless you have corresponding proportions of Representatives of each of the four nations. There, again, I could quite understand the objection if the proposal was to begin and end Bills by the decision of the Scotch Members, because it might be said that you would have inconsistent legislation with respect to the different counties. But surely if the House is the master of the Second Reading, and of the Report stage and Third Reading, it has in its own hands the power of preserving consistency and continuity of

legislation. I cannot doubt that, so far from our adding insult to injury, the prevalent feeling in England will be one of amity and generosity to Scotland, and that there will be a desire to allow the smaller country, which has certain peculiarities, or, rather, differences of law and custom, to deal with one stage of its own Bills, and to save the House the time and trouble of dealing with that stage. The Leader of the Opposition said this was a change that would revolutionise the proceedings of this House. That sounds remarkably like what one heard said for days and weeks in 1882. I do not think it would revolutionise the proceedings of the House at all; but suppose it did, if it was reasonably necessary for carrying on the purposes for which this House exists, some change should plainly be allowed. I would just put it to hon. Members on both sides of the House who object to this proposal, are they satisfied with the existing provisions for the conduct of Scotch business? If they are satisfied, I understand their opposition; if not, I do not understand why they should oppose our scheme without tabling some alternative scheme. I have not heard anyone go the length of saying that there is no necessity for some change. We all know very well that the increase of what may be called the Imperial or general business of this House is so great that the House has not been in later times so able to devote itself to local questions and local interests as it was before. It has become a matter of almost universal admission that there must be some devolution. Many gentlemen opposite I know object very strongly to the idea of anything in the nature of Home Rule for Scotland. I should have thought that was exactly the state of mind that would have led them to welcome this moderate and temperate proposal. It is a proposal which will keep under the absolute control of Parliament all Scotch measures, while, at the same time, it will enable Scotch Members at one particular stage to shape after full discussion of a Bill its details, and to bring it back to the House in a form approved by the prevalent sense of Scotland. My hon. and learned Friend said that some of the enactments of the Parish Councils Bill were carried by Scotch and Irish votes. Be it so. Even if this proposal is assented to, it will be quite open to English Members, if they desire, after the Committee

stage, to over-rule what has been done by the Scotch Members. I do not think they would exercise that power; I have far too high an opinion of their generosity to believe it, but they would have the power; and, therefore, there is no inequality in that treatment. There is one other point upon which I should like to say a word. It has been over and over again said to-night, "Why don't you ask for more time from the Government?" There has been a series of appeals to my hon. Friends on this side asking why they do not press the Government for more time. That would be a most excellent argument if time was an unlimited commodity, and if the Government had the whole time of the House to deal with and give away. But the Government have only a limited time to work upon. There are some things to be done which will not brook delay or postponement, and any Government must necessarily, in disposing of its limited quantity of time, have regard to the pressing character of the necessities of the case, and sometimes, perhaps, to the number of those who are making claims upon them. That being so, the smallest country is almost certain to go to the wall, and that, again, is a reason, when time is so necessarily limited, why it is difficult to give to Scotland as much of the time of Parliament as she reasonably requires. ["Why?"] I have already stated that time being of limited quantity, and matters of Imperial concern having the first claim, and there being a larger number of claims from other quarters, there is a tendency for Scotland not to get what she requires. It is not intended by this proposal to evade any claims which belong to the greater and more pressing questions, but side by side we desire to advance and mature the Committee stage of certain Bills, and, therefore, the suggestion that a demand should be made upon the time of the House which the House has not to give, and that hon. Members for England should be kept hanging about the Lobbies outside—because I am afraid they are not much interested in the Committee stages of these Bills—is not a good reason for opposing this moderate and temporary devolution, and by which you gain a remedy greatly needed. My hon. Friend seemed to dread the effect of what I may call the reaction of the decisions by the Scotch Grand

Committee upon English legislation. He said that though the decisions of the Grand Committee might have no direct effect, they would have an indirect effect. I am very much flattered by that suggestion, because the only indirect effect they could have would be by reason of their reasonableness and propriety, and I should not have expected that my hon. Friend, as a Scotchman, would have used the argument that the decisions of the Committee would have an indirect effect on English legislation as an argument against this proposal. These are the main points which were touched upon by my hon. and learned Friend. He gave as an instance of subjects which could not be left to such a Committee the difference in the two systems in regard to land tenure. I could not imagine a better example of what might with propriety be left to be dealt with by a Scotch Committee than the one which relates to the highly technical and special relations of landlord and tenant and of land tenure generally in Scotland. The Crofters Act might be given as an instance of that. It has been a great benefit to the country, and it is the kind of measure which might usefully go to a Scotch Committee. My hon. and learned Friend referred to the Referendum, to Disestablishment, and various other Bills, but every one of these Bills would be dealt with as regards its principle upon the Second Reading. The question as to whether there should be a Referendum, or Disestablishment, would be decided by the House as a whole, and only in the event of the House as a whole deciding that they were matters to be dealt with in Committee, would they make this reference to the Grand Committee of Scotch Members. If they decided in favour of such a reference, then I submit to the House it would be only reasonable it should be made to a Committee composed in the way proposed in this Resolution.

*MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk) remarked that during the time he had sat in this House he had never heard a measure proposed with less argument in its favour to the House than the one now under discussion. The right hon. Gentleman in submitting it stated three propositions: first of all, that the existing state of matters required a remedy; secondly, that the scheme must be

efficacious ; and, thirdly, that those best able to judge of the matter were in favour of this proposal. He thought that no one would dispute that the existing business conditions ought to be remedied, but he doubted whether the remedy proposed by the Government would be efficacious. As regarded the remark that those best able to judge were in its favour, he thought it very likely that the right hon. Gentleman and himself took different views as to the capacity of gentlemen to form an opinion on this matter. The right hon. Gentleman stated that it would give more time to the business of the House. He was directly at issue with the right hon. Gentleman on that point. He believed if this proposal were carried out that the discussions upon Scotch questions in this House would not be materially lessened, because each Bill would be discussed to the fullest degree when it came to the Report stage and Third Reading. The right hon. Gentleman also complained that the congested state of the business of the House was such that as constituted it was not able to overtake Scotch business. He thought the present Government to a great extent—at all events, in this Parliament—were to blame for that, because they had got the millstone of the Irish question about their neck, together with the Newcastle Programme, and no doubt these two formidable items blocked the way. This Committee, they were told, was to be composed of all Scotch Members, plus 15 added by the Committee of Selection. Unless these 15 to be added were all Unionists, then the Grand Committee upstairs would not reflect the political complexion of this House, and that, to his mind, was a fatal objection to this proposal. Even if all the 15 added Members were Unionists, the political complexion of the House would still not be represented. The right hon. Gentleman said that when Scotch business was being discussed in this House it was left entirely to Scotch Members, and English Members did not put in an appearance to hear the arguments. But the very same thing might be said of English questions which Scotch Members voted upon. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he did not wish for the support of his Irish allies that night who had been conspicuous by their absence throughout the whole of this

Debate? The right hon. Gentleman had described his proposal as a useful and workmanlike scheme. For his part, he was inclined to adopt the views of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow, when, speaking some two or three years ago on a similar proposal in this House, he described it as a peddling proposal. He would describe this proposal as not only peddling but parochial. It was said that Members would be able to speak at length in this Grand Committee and that there would be no Closure, but he found from the Reports that the Closure had again and again been applied in Grand Committees. The hon. Member for South Edinburgh had made a very remarkable speech. There was no argument in it in favour of this proposal, but he supposed the hon. Member wished to appear before his constituents as more Scotch than Scotchmen themselves. The hon. Gentleman said he took little interest in any question which was not Scotch. [Mr. PAUL: No.] If the hon. Member denied it he was quite prepared to accept his denial. He could only say for himself that while he was a Scotchman he took a great interest in many English questions, and he was an Imperialist out and out. He was proud of being a Scotchman, but he was still prouder of being a citizen of this great Empire, and he protested against the proposal of the Government as derogating from the power of the Imperial Parliament. If this Committee were given to Scotland, the same treatment could not logically be refused to England and Ireland, and possibly also to Wales. The result of such an arrangement would be to give a Radical complexion to Scotch questions referred to the Committee, a Conservative complexion to English questions, a possibly revolutionary complexion to Irish questions, and a Radical complexion to Welsh questions. When the Gladstonian Party were in power Scotch questions which went to the Grand Committee might also pass through this House. English questions, however, would not in all probability be passed as they left the Grand Committee, and as to Irish questions, it would depend very much upon the necessities of the Government whether they were allowed to pass them or not. When a Unionist Government was in power Scotch questions would not go through this House in the state they passed the Grand Com-

mittee ; English questions would, in all probability, pass through the House, but Irish questions certainly would not. If the Government said they would pass similar Committees for England, Ireland, and Wales their position would be logical, but not otherwise. The late Mr. Bright, speaking at Birmingham in 1886, did make a suggestion similar to this, but he did so as an alternative to Home Rule. Did the Government mean this as a substitute for Home Rule, not only as regarded Scotland, but as regarded Ireland and the other portions of the United Kingdom ? If so, while strongly objecting to the principle, he would consider whether he could not look upon it in a more favourable light than he did at the present moment. But would hon. Gentlemen from Ireland accept it as an alternative to Home Rule. He suspected they would not, for Ireland would not then be a nation in the sense desired by those hon. Members. In only one case, to his mind, would a Grand Committee for Scotch questions be satisfactory, and that would be for Bills which were non-contentious. If contentious measures were taken, then the time of the Grand Committee would be practically wasted, because the measures would be again fully discussed in the House on the Report and Third Reading stages. If the Grand Committee were constituted of Scotch Members, another objection was that they would not be able to serve on other Grand Committees or very likely on other Committees in that House. In the last Session of Parliament 43 Scotch Members served on the Scotch Committees ; 18 Members served on one Committee, 11 on two, 9 on three, and 5 on four ; and taking the average sittings as five, that represented a very considerable amount of work. This Parliament had a great record since the Union of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and he would do nothing which should in any way weaken the authority of that Parliament.

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth) said, he noticed that there were sympathetic cheers when the last speaker claimed that as a Scottish Member he was entitled to speak on this important subject, but it might be possibly thought that it was time for English Members to take part in this Debate. They had had 19 speeches either from Scotchmen or

from Englishmen representing Scotch constituencies, and so far there had been only one speech by an Englishman representing an English constituency. It was desirable, he thought, that some debate at all events upon this matter should take place by English Members of Parliament, having regard to the effect that this great proposal would have upon their position. He did not imagine for a moment that the speech of the Lord Advocate was intended as an answer to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. The way in which his right hon. and learned Friend said that an answer would be made in good time showed that he was not looking upon his own speech as a summing up and reply, and there was a more remarkable evidence of that fact than was shown in the modesty of the observation to which he had referred, afforded by the Lord Advocate expressly declining to deal with the cardinal proposition of the Amendment which the Leader of the Opposition had put before the House. That cardinal proposition was that the proposal made to the House was one of so much gravity and so far-reaching in its effect that this House would decline to consider it unless the Ministry proposing it to the House and the Ministry which would have the conduct of affairs under the new state of circumstances set up by the new Rule was ready to declare to the House the whole of its mind and purpose with regard to this matter. It was quite obvious that this proposal before the House was a proposal in itself of a very limited scope. A great deal of the discussion which had taken place that evening would have been much more appropriate to-morrow evening when there was to be a Committee to consider the methods of advancing the business of the House. If they were only to deal with this proposal in the spirit in which some hon. Members had addressed themselves to the discussion, they might fairly have said that to-morrow night's Debate might be considered as an adjournment of this, and speeches might then be made which might be considered as a prolongation of this Debate. But it was something far different that they were discussing. He was almost as enthusiastic a reformer of the procedure of this House as was the hon. Member for Dundee, and during the last 10 or 12 years he had ventured to advocate alterations of its

Rules which, he believed, would have assisted it to carry on the business. When Scotch Members in plaintive tones told them they were unable to bring Private Bills to a fruition and unable to obtain for them deliberate discussion and the adequate judgment of the House, they were not speaking of a grievance known to the Scotch Members alone. There were English Members who were just as anxious to pass Bills as the hon. Member for Dundee was to take away grocers' licences; but just as the hon. Member had to wait for an opportunity of discussing that fully before a delighted House, so English Members had to wait for an opportunity of discussing many Bills which a good many of them had got tired of putting down on the Notice Paper of the House, and in many cases had abandoned in despair. One of the Scotch Members had pointed out to them that this was not a matter upon which the Scotch Members had any very peculiar and remarkable grievances, and when that Scotch Member told them that in 12 years Scotland had passed 102 Bills against 318 for England, it appeared to some of them that Scotland had had, on the whole, rather an unfair share of the legislative activity of the House. But these questions merely of how they could promote the discussion of Private Bills or the passing of more Bills through the House were matters upon which they could meet without any great clashing of Party hostility, and he dared say that to-morrow evening, when he hoped the House would be discussing seriously and with a desire to do good work the Motion for a Committee to inquire into the arrangements that might be made for forwarding their business, it would be found that no division of Party would separate them in endeavouring to push forward reforms in the arrangements of this House. But this proposal of the Secretary for Scotland was a very much graver matter. His right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate talked about this being a moderate extension of the system of Grand Committees. He surely must have allowed to pass from his mind altogether the essential distinction between the Grand Committee now proposed and any Grand or Select Committees ever appointed by this House. For the first time they were asked to draw distinctions between

Members of the House as to their legislative authority and legislative work—distinctions which were not themselves set up by their training or capacity to inform the House upon the subject before it, but simply dependent upon the accident of their coming from one particular constituency. If there was one principle that had maintained the dignity of this House and given it efficiency and authority for its work it had been the steadfast maintenance of that principle which years ago Edmund Burke expressed in the splendid language, that a Member of Parliament was not a delegate for a particular constituency, but that, when he was elected, whether he came from an English, Irish, or Scotch constituency, he was a Member of one Parliamentary Assembly, sharing with his fellows, with equal rights and equal responsibilities, the duty of doing his best for the welfare of the whole country. That was the principle of Membership of Parliament amongst them, and that was the only principle upon which Membership of this House could remain what it was to many of them—a great enjoyment and pride. To set up any other principle, to suggest that a Member who came to this House was to be considered here as simply the Representative of a certain number of persons living in one particular locality, would destroy the dignity and pleasure of the position of Members of Parliament altogether. They had a very curious instance the other day in this House of the sort of feeling to which he was referring. It would be remembered that, not a fortnight ago, there was a discussion in this House involving the question of the Naval Estimates. A strong protest—and, in principle, a very right one—was made against the special activity of Members representing certain constituencies in this House with regard to public expenditure. Why was the protest made? It was made upon the distinct ground that, when a Member of Parliament came to this House, he ceased to be, or ought to cease to be, merely the advocate of the local interest and class of persons in his constituency and take his share of Imperial responsibility and larger Parliamentary duties. He said this was a very grave matter. It was not an extension of the Grand Committee system, but an entire departure from the principle

upon which that system was based. He did not want to admit, even casually, that he thought the system of Grand Committees in this House had been a success. He did not think that system was a success. There were, no doubt, Bills of the class of Bankruptcy Bills, or Partnership Bills, which might very well be sent to a Grand Committee; but they had found in their experience of Grand Committees, constituted even in the fair way in which they were appointed, they had broken down directly there had been a difference on the question before them involving strong Party feelings. Hon. Members of the House would recollect how the right hon. and learned Member for Bury was disappointed in 1883 that he could not carry through the Grand Committee his Bill for the consolidation of the Criminal Law, because the moment they came to a matter which involved the antagonism of the Irish Members the whole work of the Committee was thrown away. On two occasions the Grand Committees had had the Employers' Liability Bill before them, and the whole time of these Grand Committees had been absolutely wasted. He did not think, except for matters which involved no Party antagonism at all, and no principles upon which Members felt strongly, that Grand Committees were valuable, and for these he did not think the machinery of a Grand Committee was wanted at all. He was not one who believed in the system of Grand Committees, and he should be glad if the House adopted some simple Amendment introducing a Rule by which it would find itself able without difficulty to discharge the legislative business it wanted to do. The right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division, in proposing this Resolution, said it was necessary for them first to prove that there was a necessity for the taking of this step. He agreed the right hon. Gentleman ought to have proved it, but he did not, and the fault of his speech was that he began by stating what he ought to show, and sat down, after a not very prolonged speech, without having shown it at all. The right hon. Gentleman did not tell them for what Bills the Government desired to have this Grand Committee appointed. He did indicate one—the Scottish Local Government Bill—which he would propose to send to the Committee, but whether that would or would not be a fit Bill to go to a

Grand Committee he (Sir E. Clarke) did not know. The right hon. Gentleman mentioned no other, though, before he came forward to make such a vast change as this would cause in the Rules of the House, he was bound to show the House what it was the Government wanted to do, and had not been able to do because of the difficulties that existed; and although they had taken every means to overcome the difficulties, the right hon. Gentleman did neither. He mentioned one Bill—the Scottish Local Government Bill—but that Bill had not yet been introduced. Where was his example of Bills the Government had introduced and had tried to push forward and failed to carry because of these difficulties? They knew why he did not mention them, because the mind of everybody went back at once to the Scotch Suspensory Bill and that marvellous effort of legislative activity, the Scottish Fisheries Bill, and for the right hon. Gentleman to have mentioned these to the House would have been to evoke not sympathy, but to have raised a laugh, so, of course, he did not mention them. But the right hon. Gentleman had brought no instance before the House of a Bill which had been actually brought forward, and which had failed to pass because of these great difficulties. He told them of no Scottish Bill that had ever been referred to the Grand Committee as constituted with regard to which any difficulty had arisen. He believed that only once or twice had a Scottish Bill been referred to a Grand Committee, and he was quite sure that in these one or two instances there was not a failure. So they had this great Constitutional change proposed to the House, the extent of which the Government would not tell them—first, without being told what the views were that the Government desired to advance, and, secondly, without having any statement from the Government as to the difficulty found in the present practice of the House. Then there was another very important thing to be considered in this case. When the Government proposed the present system of Grand Committees the understanding was—and the plan had been acted upon almost invariably since—that only Government Bills were to be submitted to these Grand Committees; and although that had been slightly departed from, he did not think that any private Member's Bill had been

submitted to the Grand Committee unless it were connected with some Government proposal which had been already submitted to the Committee, or was in the process of such submission. But in this case all the private Members among the Scotch Members of this House would be on this Grand Committee; and were they to have the advantage of having all their Bills which had been in private Members' hands sent up to this Committee? Surely if private Scotch Members were to have the advantage of Committees at which all the difficulties which beset other Members of the House in their measures were to be got rid of then the claims for a similar Committee on the part of England, Ireland, and Wales were irresistible. It would be a case of grievous hardship to all the English Members of this House if their Scotch compeers had a Committee ready in one part of the House to deal with their Private Bills, while they were condemned to all the delays and disappointments of the general system under which they had suffered. He ventured, therefore, to say upon all these three grounds that this was something far more serious than what his right hon. and learned Friend spoke of as a moderate extension of the system of Grand Committees in this House, and he would make a further protest against it upon another ground. Hitherto, when the House had dealt in any way with the devolution of its work, it was selected either by its own direct action or the action of some of its trusted Members, persons whose capacity qualified them for dealing with the measures submitted to the Committee. How would that principle be interfered with here? The Committee would consist of Scotch Members. How about Scotchmen who were not Scotch Members? The arrangement which would exclude them would be an unnatural and an unfair one, because their exclusion would result in Members being appointed upon this Scottish Committee who were inferior in their knowledge of Scottish matters to many of those who were outside the ranks of the Scottish Members.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday.

Sir E. Clarke

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Public Petitions have power to send for persons, papers, and records.—(*Sir C. Dalrymple.*)

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Mundella, Bill to consolidate enactments relating to Merchant Shipping, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mundella, Mr. Secretary Asquith, and Mr. Burt.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 132.]

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [30th March] reported and agreed to.—[See page 1064.]

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS DISTRIBUTION.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in superintending the form and regulating the Distribution of Parliamentary Papers.

Ordered, That Mr. Bartley, Mr. Causton, Mr. Cavendish, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Howell, Sir Herbert Maxwell, and Mr. Francis Stevenson be Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Causton.*)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL, &c.

Lords Message [19th March] communicating the following Resolution, namely—

“That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament,” considered.

Resolved, That this House doth concur with the Lords in the said Resolution.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.—(*The Attorney General.*)

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 21st March 1894, declaring that Patrick Moran, Acting Issuer, Army Service Corps, Barbados, War Department, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 3rd April 1894.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (TOWER
BRIDGE SOUTHERN APPROACH) BILL
(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
"That the Bill be now read a second
time."

*MR. ALBAN GIBBS (London) said, that when he gave notice of opposition to this Bill he did not, of course, intend to oppose what he might call the subsidiary clauses of this Bill—that was, the proposal to construct an approach leading from the south to the Tower Bridge. He did not regard the plan that had found favour with the London County Council as altogether the best plan that might be made, and he did not think it reflected credit on the management of the London County Council that the plan was only now going to be begun after the Tower Bridge was on the point of completion; but his objection to the Bill was to what he might call the principle of the Bill—namely, the 37th clause, which was commonly called the Betterment Clause. That it was the main principle of the Bill was practically admitted by the London County Council last year when they refused to proceed with the Bill after this main principle had been taken out. He was most anxious not to trespass on the time of the House by making a Committee speech; therefore, he would briefly allude to the objections that might be made to this particular form of the Betterment Clause, such as the arbitrary way in which certain areas were scheduled for betterment, the preposterously long time during which this sword of Damocles, in the shape of a betterment charge, was kept hanging over the head of the unfortunate owner and occupier, to the preposterously short time that was allowed to him to object to the betterment charge made on him, and to the entirely new principle of denying the privilege of a jury to assess what pay-

ment was due from him instead of putting it on the *ipse dixit* of an arbitrator, in whose appointment he obviously had no voice whatever. He admitted that as the arbitrators were to be appointed by a Public Department they would be fairly and justly appointed; at the same time, he thought a Public Department would be rather inclined to be against an individual, and he did not think they would appoint an arbitrator who had any leaning in favour of private persons. If it were shown that some scheme could be devised by which the owner and occupier of a property, which would be improved by some scheme, should properly and justly pay their share, he would be the last man to object to it; but he contended that the present system, under which a fresh rating was made as soon as an improvement was made, so that the occupier paid as long as the property was in his possession, and then the freeholder, as long as the improvement lasted, did all that was necessary. Under the proposed system the property might be placed under a perpetual rent-charge for some improvement which appeared to benefit it, and some future improvement might leave the property high and dry, yet it would have to go on paying the same betterment charge. Moreover, he submitted, it introduced a very great and new principle which was entirely new to our law. Of course, he knew that an instance was adduced in the time of Charles II., immediately after the great fire, when a charge something in the nature of betterment was imposed, but it was only done once; it evidently did not answer, for it was never tried again; therefore he was justified in saying it was a new principle. That being so, he held that it ought to have been brought forward as a Public Bill by a Minister of the Crown, after due inquiry by a Royal Commission or something analogous. Last Session the House of Lords proposed a Joint Committee to look into this thing, but at that time Ministers were not ready to accept any suggestions made by the House of Lords, and, therefore, they pooh-poohed it. He was much obliged to the House for listening to him on this dry subject, but he thought it right that they should make some protest against this Betterment Clause in order that it might not be supposed that they, on that

side of the House, were in any way agreed to it. At the same time, this clause appearing as it did in a Bill for a very desirable object, he might say tacked to the Bill, he did not propose at this time to move the Resolution that he had placed on the Paper, therefore, he should content himself with this protest, and should take a further and more convenient opportunity on some further stage of the Bill of opposing the Betterment Clause.

*MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, with regard to this Bill before the House he wished to emphasise the remarks that had fallen from his hon. Friend the Member for the City (Mr. Alban Gibbs), but it appeared to him it would have been more desirable and better if a great change in the system of taxation had been introduced into this House by means of a Public Bill. Regarding this most beneficial improvement of the Tower Bridge, hon. Members on that side of the House *per se* did not wish to oppose this most useful improvement made by the City of London, but they did oppose this novel principle of betterment in the Bill that they had now to consider. They were told the improvement was to be made by the whole County of London. Why by the whole county? In the past there were valuable improvements made that were purely Metropolitan, and paid for by the Metropolis as a whole. There were other improvements made in various districts in London, which were purely parochial improvements, and paid by the individual parish concerned, and there were others that were partly Metropolitan and partly parochial, and paid for partly by the general rate over the whole of London, and partly by the parochial rate. Therefore, he would like to ask why the whole of the cost was to be paid by the County of London? It was calculated in another place, in regard to another Bill, that the amount to be received for the betterment principle, contained in the Bill now under discussion, would only be about £150 a year; but he would ask why the parish of Bermondsey, which would be greatly benefited by the bridge, should not pay its quota? The real reason, in his opinion, was this: that it would not then have made such a strong case for betterment had the parish of Bermondsey to pay its fair and just quota. Hon.

Mr. Alban Gibbs

Members opposite claimed that property did not pay when it was bettered by improvements; but he would point out to them that by the Metropolis Valuation Act of 1869, Section 46, that not every five years only, but by means of supplemental and provisional lists every year, and every month, a man's rating might be put up and down according as the value of his property rose or fell. By this Bill the introduction of the betterment system meant that for all time, to the end of the world, a certain charge would be put on the property; there would be no re-valuation every five years, and there would be no power as under the existing law to re-value property every year or every month. There were many other schemes more advantageous to the ratepayers, and he was very much surprised that the London County Council had not carefully considered the recoupment system that worked so well with regard to Northumberland Avenue. The ratepayers of London, by that particular system, not only were gainers by that magnificent thoroughfare itself, but also received in aid of local taxation a sum of £250,000 or £300,000. He was willing to admit there were cases where landowners received benefit by improvements made by the Public Authorities, and he thought it would be desirable for a strong Committee to inquire into the matter, so that a Bill could be brought in which should provide that when a landowner was shown to have derived benefit from public improvements he should be called on to pay his just quota. But, at the same time, if that was admitted, they ought to consider this other fact—that if, on the other hand, an individual had his property injured by a public improvement the community ought to bear the loss with him. So far as this Bill was concerned, it appeared to him that the community was to take half the profit, if there was any, and that the individual, whether in Bermondsey or anywhere else, took the whole of the loss. In fact, to use a somewhat sporting expression, this scheme was nothing more nor less than “Heads I win, tails you lose.” Now, he would not dispute the proposition that where property was specially benefited it should be specially assessed in respect of that increment. But how was that to be considered by the London County Council? It was to be in this way—that

if an arbitrator appointed by themselves considered that the property had been benefited, then for all time it would be a fixed charge on that property. There was, no doubt, a sort of appeal, but it would be, as he would show later, both of an expensive and dilatory character, and it was only in reality an appeal from the surveyor of the London County Council to that of the Local Government Board. In this particular instance the London County Council had been very wise and had not attacked any very important vested interest in London; they had not attacked the brewing interest, or large manufactures, or the large and wealthy men of influence, or the residential landowners, but they had attacked a body of individuals who were, comparatively speaking, poor men, although, no doubt, amongst those properties that would be included in the betterment clauses were Messrs. Sles' vinegar works, which happened to be very close to the bridge. He understood this firm of vinegar manufacturers had a 40 years' lease on their premises, but could any reasonable man allege that a vinegar manufactory would be benefited by a road being put in proximity to these works? They had to look at the actual value of the property as it was at present and not to a prospective value. Such a valuation could only be absolutely arbitrary and speculative. Last night he attended an important discussion at the Surveyors' Institute where he heard a member of the London County Council deliver a lecture on ground rents, but he defied any of the eminent surveyors he met there to say what would be the value of property in London 40 or 50 years hence in any definite area, but that would be the duty of the surveyor in considering the question of betterment. Under the clause a surveyor would have to say what, in his opinion, the value of certain property would be 40 or 50 years hence. The system of betterment introduced a totally new system into our system of taxing the capital value of real property. That had never been the principle on which they had taxed property in this country. It was, no doubt, a principle which had been introduced into America, but it had never been the custom hitherto in the United Kingdom; and if they

were going to alter the system of taxation in local municipal areas, he ventured to say they should do it by means of a Public Bill. Now what was this system of betterment? it was an objectionable expression denoting the moiety of an undefined quantity—namely, the enhanced value of property affected by the improvements of the London County Council. He ventured to think that a scheme might be devised by the London County Council which would really benefit the locality in a very much more satisfactory way than the present scheme. And what did the present scheme do? It went behind the great principle that had hitherto been one of the grand principles of the Liberal Party in this House, that representation should accompany taxation. By this betterment system they were going to tax the landowners in the various local districts of London, whilst they gave them no voting power as owners either for County Council elections or for local ones. The system by which they had hitherto carried on government with regard to local taxation was that the burden of the year should fall on the annual value of the property, but this betterment charge would remain an unvarying one for all time. With regard to one principle in this scheme—namely, the proposed “limits of deviation,” he should like to say a few words. Might it not be the fact that even on the London County Council they might have a surveyor or somebody who might be biased in regard to his action, and might it not be impossible that in selecting individuals as subjects for this arbitrary form of impost to disassociate entirely from his mind the question whether those individuals did or did not support the views of the majority of the Council? They knew also that fashions changed with regard to important districts in London. They knew that at one time that district north of the Park, including Portland Square, Russell Square, and Bedford Square was higher rented than at the present time; they knew that fashion had changed and gone further south to Grosvenor Square, and why should not fashion change equally with regard to other areas of London? Therefore, it seemed to him it would be a great injury and wrong to inflict on any landowners a tax for all

time on their property by the *ipse dixit* of some officer of the London County Council. Some people denied that this was either a tax or a rate; he would not therefore call it either, but would describe it as an impost in the nature of a mortgage. If the payment of this charge became in arrear, the Council had power to enter and sell the property in question to satisfy their claim for so-called betterment? Up to the present time it had been the rule that only chattels, movable property, could be seized in payment of rates and taxes due by the ratepayers of the Metropolis, but by this Bill the property itself could be seized and be specially disposed of by the London County Council. In his opinion, it would be very difficult to dispose of property when for six or seven years the cloud of this betterment award might be hanging over it. It should be noticed by the House that seven years might elapse, and in some instances eight, ere the arbitrator's award for betterment of a certain property was settled; and it must, too, be borne in mind that it was a charge on the supposed capital value of a given property not at the moment, but for all time. This could only be a matter of speculation, whereas the annual value of a property, as it now existed, was a matter of fact. He was ready to admit they ought to take every step to reduce the local taxation of London, which was a very heavy burden upon the people of London. At the present time he might mention there was a local debt of no less than £40,000,000 sterling on the Metropolis, but the mode by which the London County Council wished to relieve the ratepayers was not a good or beneficial one. In the last three years the Council had spent in the Parliamentary Committee-rooms upstairs no less a sum than £30,000 in fighting various schemes that came before Parliamentary Committees, and he could not help thinking they must regret that in 1886-7 and 1888 they allowed the Coal and Wine Duties to be repealed, which, whilst their abolition had not decreased the price of coals, £300,000 a year was lost in aid of London rates and for Metropolitan improvements. In fact, the betterment system was only an idea which might enter the mind of the arbitrator as to what the enhanced value would be at some future date. They knew very well

that people dreaded going to law in this country. Even the great landowners knew very well the great expense of appearing before Parliamentary Committees, and would consider long before doing so in defence of their rights; but, on the other hand, the London County Council, having the whole taxpayers of London behind them, would not hesitate to bring in Bills imposing any particular system of betterment in any part of the Metropolis, and to that extent they would oppress the individual owner, more especially the least wealthy of them. The cost the London County Council had already gone to in this betterment scheme of theirs would have paid three or four times over any sum they could ever receive by this particular proposal. He did not really believe in his heart of hearts that the hon. Members composing the London County Council were so impressed with this system as they pretended; their object was to have a good fighting question on which to attack the House of Lords. It was a remarkable fact that the members of the County Council did not see that by causing a feeling of uncertainty to arise as to the future onus of taxation on any given house or property they would increase the house rent to the individual occupier; for it was an obvious fact that the landowner had, by the contracts he had entered into, contracted himself out of any obligation with regard to taxes; he had placed that obligation on the individual taking the building lease, who had placed the obligation in his turn on the occupier, so that unless these leases were done away with—and he did not think that Parliament would, in its wisdom, go to the extreme measure of abolishing all leases and contracts made with regard to the whole of the property in London—the whole cost of this betterment would in reality fall on the occupier of the houses in the particular locality. Hon. Members opposite would hesitate before advocating, either in this House or before their constituents, any tax on food used by the working classes, and yet they were apparently anxious to put on a tax that would increase the cost of house rent in London. With the exception of the precedent when a great part of London was re-built after the great fire of London, he did not think there was any analogy to the present

proposal in this country. But to consider this question in all its bearings one would have to look at the obverse side of the question. Hon. Members imagined that whenever they made a new road or a new street in a given locality they were always going to benefit that locality. They might benefit the locality, but it could not be said that in all cases it benefited individual proprietors in that locality. What did they find when this subject was discussed in the Committee upstairs? Mr. Field, one of the surveyors retained as a witness by the London County Council, said that no doubt street improvements occasionally created worsement, and he granted it was impossible to assess the compensation for that worsement. That being so, why was it more easy to assess compensation for the betterment? Surely the two were correlative. A learned counsel, who was a witness for the London County Council, Mr. Fletcher Moulton, Q.C., in his evidence before the Committee, granted that if two several parts of the same property were affected by alterations made by a Public Authority, one of which bettered and the other worsened the several parts of the property affected, the owner ought to be allowed to set off the worsement against the betterment, and pay or receive as the case might be. The late Mr. Saunders, who appeared for the London County Council, bound his clients to insert words in the Bill to enable the owner of the various properties concerned to receive compensation for worsement, where it was caused by the alteration in question. What was the result? Notwithstanding, Mr. Saunders, having given this distinct pledge that words should be introduced in the Bill for the worsement principle, in the result no such words were so introduced; it passed through this House, and was sent up to the other House without those words being inserted. If, however, it was right to give to a single proprietor the right to set off the worsement of his property in one part against a betterment in another, it should be equally done in the case where no betterment occurred, and compensation should also then be given for worsement. The worsement area would, it were needless to say, be, for obvious reasons, not co-terminous with the "limits of deviation" for betterment. He did not,

however, wish to occupy the time of the House further than to say that he did not believe a proposal that would do less benefit to the ratepayers than this betterment principle could be conceived. He found that in America, where it had been tried, it had been found absolutely and completely wanting. In New York and elsewhere in America they had three or four systems, working even in one given city at the same time, all of which were found to, in many instances, work oppression on the individual, on the one hand, and cause the danger of bribery on the other, by the fact that the area of "the limits of deviation" were an unknown quantity, subject to the will of the Municipal Surveyor, or a small works committee of a given Municipal Authority, and he thought they would hesitate to copy the Americans in that respect. He found that nearly all the leading American jurists said it was a doubtful system; and one who wrote to a friend of his, Mr. Baumann, who used to be a Member of this House, said the way it occasionally worked was this. The working classes, finding themselves in a majority in a certain town, had a towns' meeting, which decided that a certain betterment system should be introduced, as in America in some townships such matters were settled by a sort of *plébiscite*. It was not shown that the proposed public work was required, but the result was that the inhabitants of the district had to have it, and the landowners were obliged to bow to the decision, and probably 500 or 600 of these men who voted for it received wages at the rate of two dollars a day for being employed on the works, which was a rate over the market wage in the United States—the whole cost of the so-called improvement, or the major part of it, being paid by the unfortunate landowner, for so-called "betterment," though in many instances it practically injured and decreased the value of the property. Hitherto they had carried out their local government system on very different principles to that, and he would impress upon the London County Council that if they were going to attempt to alter our principle of rating they should do so on a sounder principle than the system of betterment. Their legislation at the present time left the House in a

sufficiently chaotic state, and it would be a great injury to the legislative system if this principle were introduced into Private Bills from time to time. He ventured to say that our laws would be even more chaotic than at present, for this betterment system did clumsily and arbitrarily the same thing that was done now by the ordinary operations of the market.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, he had hoped the Bill might have gone forward without being delayed by speeches which, so far from making a straight attack on a principle, wandered round about it. He should not follow the example of those hon. Members. The Bill had been introduced under somewhat peculiar circumstances. There was a Bill brought forward on which there was really no contention, except on one clause, the Betterment Clause. It went before a Committee of this House, and, having been investigated and local evidence taken which had been published to this House by that Committee, the clause referred to was twice adopted in this House by overwhelming majorities—first, of two to one; and, secondly, of nearly three to one. After the clause had been rejected by the House of Lords without consideration it was adopted and sent back to the House of Lords; but under those circumstances the House of Lords refused to introduce the clause, and the Bill fell through. Now, in the present year, in this Session of Parliament, the London County Council had re-introduced the Bill, and it was re-introduced, so far as the Tower Bridge was concerned, in exactly the same words in which it was passed by this House. The Bill was not altered in one jot or tittle; it was brought forward again, and he should almost have expected that its adoption by this House would have been regarded as a matter, more or less, of form; that it would have passed through its various stages and been sent up to the House of Lords there to receive that consideration it had not received. In respect of the action of the House of Lords in this matter the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition made the following remarkable statement. He said—

"The Lords desire to inquire whether there is any equitable machinery by which the per-

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son the value of whose property is increased by an improvement can be made to contribute to the cost of the improvement. That is my view of what the words mean, and the words are certainly capable of that construction."

The right hon. Gentleman expressed that as the desire of the House of Lords in asking for a Joint Committee at that time last Session. He did not see that was the meaning of the Resolution, but they were willing to accept that interpretation from the right hon. Gentleman. By passing this Bill through its various stages in this House as it had been already introduced the House of Commons had the opportunity of enabling the House of Lords to carry out that wish which the right hon. Gentleman expressed as the wish of the House of Lords—that was to say, to inquire into the matter. The right hon. Gentleman further said—

"I believe that the majority of gentlemen on this side of the House have only one difficulty in regard to betterment—which is, how to carry it out: and if they could see any machinery by which that end could be attained, they would be as anxious to see the principle introduced into our Private Bill legislation as anyone on the other side of the House."

And the right hon. Gentleman then said—

"It is not fair to allege that the Lords as a body, collectively or individually, are opposed to the principle of betterment."

They wished to let the Lords have the opportunity of sending it to a Committee which could make the inquiries they desired to make. He might give another quotation from Lord Morley in the other House. This was what Lord Morley said, and the quotation was taken from *Hansard*, as corrected by Lord Morley—

"He was inclined to agree that it would be extremely difficult by a Public Act to lay down principles which would apply to every variety of case that could occur, not only in London, but elsewhere. He was not at all sure it would be desirable or safe to lay down general principles which would be at once adopted without any experience being obtained on these grounds, and on the grounds that the application of the principle in this case depended entirely on local circumstances; he thought it was a subject that might legitimately and rightly be left to private legislation. They would then have the advantage of the application of the principle to individual cases, and by the growth of experience they would gradually get such an amount of knowledge as to be able to lay down principles for individual application."

Now that was the attitude which they called on the House of Lords to take in

conformity with the declaration of their view as expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. This Bill was introduced again to the House, and he should have thought they might have been spared a discussion on the principle of betterment. He had no intention of entering into the discussion of its general principles and that particular phase which had been already as greatly misrepresented by the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken as by Lord Salisbury; and the hon. Gentleman had fallen into the same error that Lord Salisbury fell into when he spoke of the London County Council venturing to assume that, wherever there was an improvement, there betterment would arise. On the contrary, that was not the assumption of the Bill. Lord Salisbury said—

“The principle of the 41st clause of the Bill”—now the 37th—“which your Lordships declined to accept, was that proximity is the one test of improvement, and that, if you are near a public improvement, it says that your property must have improved by that public improvement. A more senseless suggestion was never put—and that is saying a good deal—into a Bill presented to Parliament.”

MR. R. G. WEBSTER: There is no proposition in the Bill with regard to worsement.

MR. J. STUART said, that was a totally different question; the point he was dealing with was that the hon. Gentleman fell into the same error as Lord Salisbury when he assumed the only test of betterment was the proximity to the improvement. The essential point of the method of charging for betterment was this—that no one should be called on to contribute any part of the charge who was not clearly in receipt of betterment on which the charge was made. The hon. Gentleman, when he ventured to oppose the Bill in this House, and the late Prime Minister in the Upper House should make themselves aware by the simple perusal of the Bill of what were its contents. There were only two points in what had been said it was incumbent upon him to answer, for, as he had said, he did not intend to enter into a general discussion. The two main points were these, and they were points of misstatement. The first was as to recoupment, to which the hon. Gentleman who spoke last referred. The hon. Member referred to the

method of recoupment in London as having been a satisfactory method to the ratepayers, and one that provided a large sum of money. If the hon. Member looked into the figures before the Committee upstairs, it was shown, and could not be disputed, that the recoupment system as introduced and carried out in the Metropolis had been an extreme pecuniary burden to the ratepayers, and it was owing to the failure of that system that the betterment system was substituted. The other point he wished to call attention to was one on which they had often been misrepresented in the County Council, and in this House. It had been said, with respect to this Bill and with respect to their action on the betterment section of it, that they ought to have proceeded with the Bill for the Tower Bridge approach without waiting for any Betterment Clause, because they were bound in honour to make an approach to the bridge that was made by the City of London. He understood the hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Alban Gibbs) signified by his action his approval of that statement. Now, would the House believe that the main Petitions against the Bill as it stood were the Corporation of the City of London, and would the House believe that the Petition against the Bill laid on the Table by the Corporation of the City of London was not only a Petition against betterment, but against the actual improvement itself? The Petitioners went into some detail, and said the betterment system was bad and could not be applied; they put themselves in direct opposition to the great majority of this House and the Committee upstairs. Therefore, by going on without the Betterment Clause they should not be meeting what the City of London wanted. The London County Council, who had introduced the Bill again, looked on the Betterment Clause as one of the most important clauses brought before this House in any private legislation, and in regard to it they had now got the assistance of the Corporation of Manchester, whose Bill down for this day contained the same Betterment Clause. He could not doubt that the House would willingly assent to this principle as it did last year, and would send the Bill to the House of Lords, which would then have the oppor-

tunity of giving that consideration to it in Committee which they and their most trusted advisers said it ought to have, and which it would have had last year but for the complete misunderstanding of the Bill by their Lordships when it was before them.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, the speech of the hon. Member for Hoxton (Mr. Stuart) would have been noticed for one peculiarity, and that was that it contained no reason in support of the Betterment Code which was included in this Bill; the only reason in support of the Betterment Code in the Bill which was given was that a similar clause was in another Bill last year which was passed by this House by, as he admitted, a considerable majority. The merits of the Betterment Code had never been threshed out in this House, and the hon. Member omitted to state the important fact that when the Code got to the House of Lords the House of Lords threw the Bill out. The hon. Member might attach no importance to that, but he thought the country would attach importance to it, and desire that there should be a dispassionate discussion. Lord Hobhouse had recently accused the opponents of betterment of having never given a hint or a suggestion of any kind as to what should be the method of applying the principle. The noble Lord told them that they were met by a mere negation; but he could not have paid attention to the proceedings of three Committees of that House, on two of which he sat. He maintained that there were means under the existing law of applying the principle of betterment. He was in favour of the application of the principle under the existing machinery. The London County Council were not satisfied with the methods then in use for assessing the rates, but they considered it necessary to devise some new system, and in order to conceal as much as possible what they were doing they invented the principle of annual annuities. They did it in a more insidious manner. They provided that an annuity of £3 a year should not be redeemed or redeemable in all time except by payment of £100 in cash. It was all very well for Lord Hobhouse and hon. Gentlemen to say that the plan devised was one which should receive the unanimous support of the House, because it was a plan by

which those who secured the benefits from the working of the Act would be the persons directly called upon to contribute to the expenses incurred in carrying out the improvements. It was also very well to say they had never suggested any alternative plan to secure that those who got the benefit of the improvements should pay for them; but the existing arrangement under the Valuation Act of 1869 had been found to work, on the whole, very fairly; it had been in force now 25 years, and every year it was revised by means of supplemental lists. He would ask any gentleman on the opposite Bench who lived in a fashionable part of London whether he was willing that his rent should be increased, say, £60 a year, and the capital value of his house raised from £200 or £300 a year, as now, to six times that figure, because the London County Council chose to think that they had a right to assess his house, not at its present value as now, but at what they considered would be its value at a future time. It was frequently the case that the value of a house suddenly disappeared, and in such a case he would like to know if the annuity was to remain a burden on the property for ever? Yet no provision had been made for any deterioration in the living value of a house during the period over which the assessment extended. Was that a reasonable, fair, or just method of levying a tax? He would like to point out to the hon. Member for Hoxton that this one clause contained 17 sub-clauses, and a number of sections, so that it constituted a regular Code in itself. Although this was in one sense a Private Bill, in so far as it affected private taxation, yet it dealt with a matter of general public interest, and involved an alteration of a great public principle; and it seemed to him, therefore, to be very inconvenient that no explanation had been given hon. Members of the grounds upon which it had been brought forward. This way of bringing in a Bill put Members who wished to oppose a measure in a difficult position, as they could only meet the questions raised in the negative, and do their utmost to show that in their opinion the proposed innovation was bad and that the existing law was good. He therefore need make no apology to the House for entering into those particulars. He had already given

Mr. J. Stuart

his definition of the just principle of betterment. He would apply it by an enhanced rate while the enhanced value of the property continued, and no longer. But what was the system proposed to be adopted? First, the value of the property was scheduled in the document which the London County Council called "the award." Assessment Committees fixed the amount, and ratepayers and individuals were not allowed to go before the County Council itself to show cause against the award, but the authorities were entitled to say to any ratepayer, "Your property will be increased in value by this improvement to the extent of £200, or £6 annual value, and we put you in the list on that assessment." The list actually became the award, and if the ratepayer felt aggrieved the only course open to him was to resort to the expensive method of taking legal steps to have his appeal tried, not before the ordinary tribunals of the country, but before an arbitrator. Being compelled to go to law in such a matter as this was doubly serious, because not only was the result uncertain, in which case the appellant would be saddled with very heavy costs, but it was a case of a private individual having to fight a public body who were perfectly irresponsible for any expenses which they incurred. Therefore, the proposal of the Council involved a very serious innovation—indeed a violent innovation in the accepted law. He was well aware that the London County Council had no respect for Rules and Regulations held sacred by our grandfathers; but he thought they should show some kind of respect to the present laws relating to taxation, and not bring in such great innovations without giving very good and substantial reasons for so doing. The second serious innovation which this House was asked to sanction was the conferring of a power upon the London County Council to alter the incidence of taxation between owners, lessees, and occupiers of property. This innovation was also smoothed over by a statement that the tax would be levied on the landlord of the premises and not on the tenant, and that where the house was not occupied by the owner the Act would not apply. This was altogether a false cry. The present system was to assess the house and the site with everything upon it, and he maintained that they rightly assessed that at its gross

value. But there were generally three persons interested in a property—the owner, the lessee, and the occupier, and now the assessment was divided between the three parties in such proportions as they might agree upon. But this Bill proposed to do away with the existing freedom of arrangement, and to differentiate between the parties. On the previous night he received an intimation from some of the members of the County Council that they intended to oppose the Instruction he had put on the Paper, and he was, therefore, unable to move it that day. But he trusted the Leader of the House and the Government generally would support the proposal he intended to make, which was to the effect that such a matter as this should be brought in as a Public Bill, and thoroughly discussed as a public measure. He hoped, also, that the Government would take steps to have full inquiries made as to whether the facts that had been put forward were really true. He wished to have ascertained the effects of these changes on the existing law of the country. The third innovation consisted in a restricted area of taxation, and the plan submitted by the County Council showed that while outside the lines of the plan certain properties would be bettered, other properties inside the lines would not be bettered. This would be manifestly a gross injustice, to be founded on an arbitrary decision in the office of the surveyor to the London County Council, into the reasons for which no outsider could inquire. So far they had never had submitted to them any reason for constituting this restricted area. Again, the existing legal remedies were abolished by the Bill. Now aggrieved persons could go before the Assessment Committee, which was fairly constituted, without counsel, solicitors, or surveyors; and from this Committee there was now an appeal to Quarter Sessions, which was simple and inexpensive. For this generally equitable tribunal there was to be substituted a Judge selected on the application of the County Council to the Local Government Board, and persons appeared before this tribunal with the peril facing them of having, in all probability, to pay costs. They were, in fact, to lose the benefit of the existing tribunal on which they could rely. The House of Commons, by two important Public Commit-

tees, in 1870 and 1889—a Committee on the subject of Local Taxation and the Committee on the Town Holdings Act of 1882—reported that if and when local taxation was so altered that the immediate and direct incidence of it fell not upon the occupier as now, and through him upon the owner, but upon the owners direct, representation must be given to the owners on the body which spent the money. But no such representation was here vouchsafed. The County Council had, moreover, abandoned the system of recoupment, the principle of which was the purchase of such land as would be bettered by the proposed improvement in order by re-sale to recover the cost of the improvement. It was, however, admitted that recoupment had been a loss, except in two cases, one of these being the Northumberland Avenue, from which a large profit was made, and the loss had been caused by every man who was worsened having to be compensated before he was turned out. Now, the County Council thought that they would escape compensations for worsenment. Was this a just principle to sanction? The Council further proposed to tax vacant land and unproductive property. The first principle of our system of taxation was that the needs of the year, as regarded local expenditure, should be met out of the income of the year—an income drawn from all properties within the area. This principle it was now proposed to depart from, and by saying they would tax everything that existed, whether it produced anything or nothing, they were reverting to the crudest forms of American taxation. He should not move the Instruction to the Committee of which he had given notice, because it would occupy the House for another day; but when the Government referred the Bill to a Committee, he was anxious to ensure that they had a Report, aye or no, whether the Betterment Clause contained the inequalities which had been suggested. He wanted that in black and white before the Bill went to the House of Lords, where he hoped it would be examined on its merits. He hoped the Bill would not be referred to a Hybrid Committee, which was the worst possible Committee for a Bill of the kind, and that the House would support the Instruction to the Committee which he had placed on the Paper to report generally on the principle of “better-

ment,” and how far and to what extent it interfered with our existing laws of local taxation.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, he was glad that his hon. Friend who had initiated the discussion had expressed his intention of not dividing the House. His hon. Friend spoke on this occasion rather as the representative of ancient traditions than as Member for the City, and rather as an individual than as a Conservative. Not as a Conservative, because the Manchester Corporation proposed a similar plan in a Bill which bore the name of the Leader of the Opposition; not as Member for the City, because more than one meeting had been held at the rooms of the Chamber of Commerce, where unanimous opinions had been passed urging the great importance of making the southern approaches to the Tower Bridge. Indeed, he did not understand his hon. Friend to contest the importance of the improvement, but only to object to the single clause dealing with betterment. The hon. Member who had just sat down complained of the reference of the Bill of last year to a Hybrid Committee. That was not the choice of the supporters of the Bill; and the Hybrid Committee was only agreed to to conciliate hon. Members opposite from whom the suggestion originated. The hon. Member also complained that no speech had been made on the introduction of the Bill. The Bill was introduced without a word of comment to save the time of the House, because the same discussion had already occupied the House several times. He believed that the differences between the hon. Member and the supporters of the Bill arose partly from the fact that some hon. Members did not quite understand what the Bill effected. In a pamphlet on the subject the hon. Member said that the area of betterment was arbitrarily drawn by lines on a map, and, while including property which was not bettered, excluded property which was very much bettered. From that statement it might be supposed that all the property within the area was to be taxed; but such was not the case. No property could be taxed unless it had been shown that it was materially improved. The hon. Member further stated in his pamphlet that the tax was imposed, not on the

ascertained increased value, but on the basis of the County Council's own opinion that the property would be improved. This was an entire misapprehension. Truly, no claim would be made unless the County Council were of opinion that the property had been improved; but before the tax could be levied an arbitrator, appointed by the Local Government Board, must be satisfied that the claim was just. In this matter it was impossible to do absolute justice; the only thing to be done was to arrive at a system which would do the least injustice all round. Under the old system half the cost of improvements fell on the district and half on the Metropolis; and it frequently happened that property not benefited at all paid both the district and the Metropolitan rate. He could not but feel that the ratepayers of London had reason for complaint against the Government in reference to this question. The whole amount which this betterment tax was expected to raise was £5,000. The expense of promoting the Bill before the House last Session was about £5,000; the expense of the present Bill would be considerable; and the delay in opening the approaches to the Tower Bridge would inflict great inconvenience on the trade of South London. If the Government had accepted the proposal of the House of Lords for a Joint Committee on the question last year all this extra expense would have been saved and the Bill would have been passed a year sooner. The unreasoning animosity of the Government against the House of Lords had inflicted this additional expense on London and entailed great loss and inconvenience on trade and commerce.

*MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, that while absolutely agreeing in the last observations which fell from the right hon. Member for London University, he should like to point out to the House that he thought his right hon. Friend was under a misapprehension when he said that all that was to be done was to satisfy the Local Government Board as to the equity of the increased assessment that was proposed to be placed on certain property. If hon. Members would refer to the Bill they would observe that the Local Government Board never interfered in any way whatever. The Local Government Board had, indeed, to appoint an Inspector, who was to be

satisfied with the increase in the value of the property proposed to be taxed; but that procedure was only resorted to when some intrepid, wealthy, and public-spirited individual ventured into the arena to fight the London County Council with his own money, while the County Council fought with the money of the ratepayers. In the House or elsewhere he had never neglected an opportunity of advocating the principle of betterment—a principle which he thought would have more quickly and more efficiently become law if those in authority in the London County Council who were promoting this Bill had not for four years wasted thousands of pounds of the ratepayers in the at last successful effort to rescue £5,000. If, instead of that, they had put pressure on the Government to assent to the principle, it would have done away with controversy, it would have secured an automatic operation of the principle, which his hon. Friends and Colleagues opposite professed to advocate, though their action must in the minds of impartial persons, and certainly in the minds of the suffering ratepayers, throw doubt on the genuineness of their views.

MR. THORNTON (Clapham) said, he would like to point out that in the Hybrid Committee the Betterment Clause was carried only by one vote, that of the hon. Member for West Fife, who had stated he had been able to find out all the arguments on the question from the Report of the Committee, and therefore did not think it worth while to be present at the discussions. He ventured to think the London County Council had made a mistake in ignoring expert individual opinion on the question such as that of Sir Whittaker Ellis.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

MR. KIMBER: With regard to the Instruction which has been placed on the Paper by me, I do not know whether hon. Gentlemen opposite intend to oppose it.

MR. J. STUART: Yes, Sir; we oppose the entire Instruction.

MR. KIMBER: I am not going to subject the House to a second Debate on this question to-morrow; but perhaps

the Government may suggest some means for the elucidation of this subject.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Government cannot accept this Instruction, because it proposes that the Committee should go into all questions which were thoroughly investigated by a Committee appointed for the purpose three years ago. I was myself a Member of that Committee; we went most carefully into the question, and though we did not report at length we came to a conclusion in the matter. Under these circumstances, the Government cannot allow this Instruction to pass.

POLICE AND SANITARY REGULATIONS.

APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.): I understand that last week an arrangement was arrived at between the hon. Member for South Islington and Her Majesty's Government that the Motion for the Police and Sanitary Committee should be moved in the terms in which it stands on the Paper. I have only to observe that we fully agree with the view of the Association of Municipal Corporations that Standing Orders 150 and 173^a are already applicable and the Government will not move an Instruction. I beg to move—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Committee of Selection do appoint a Committee, not exceeding Nine Members, to whom shall be committed all Private Bills promoted by Municipal and other Local Authorities, by which it is proposed to create powers relating to Police and Sanitary Regulations which deviate from, or are in extension of, or are repugnant to, the General Law.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

That Five be the quorum of the Committee."
—(Mr. George Russell.)

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, that as some exception had been taken by Municipalities to the action of the Police and Sanitary Committee in excising and restricting certain of their Bills, he had feared it might have been necessary for him to oppose the Motion. No doubt the Committee had been controlled to a large extent by a special Instruction which had been passed by the House previously for

their guidance, with the result that its operation in the last two or three years had been undoubtedly of a character to produce what was felt to be a too centralising spirit on the part of the Department in dealing with the local Private Bills of Corporations. However, the matter had been met in a very cordial and generous spirit by the Local Government Board, the Under Secretary of which had seen him, and done his best to meet the Corporations' wishes; and therefore he would not divide the House on the subject this Session. He would only express the hope that in the coming year the Committee, unfettered by an Instruction and with a greater representation of the Municipalities on it, might allow more liberty to that spirit of local legislation which had been the chief means of building up the statutes of local government, such as the Public Health Act and others. In that hope he assented most readily to the Motion.

MR. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, that as he had been Chairman of this Committee during the last Session of Parliament, he might be allowed to say a few words on the Motion. He regretted that his hon. Friend the Member for Islington had not thought fit to promulgate more definitely the charges he desired to bring against the Committee, because he questioned whether it would be possible for his hon. Friend to establish the central charge he had advanced—namely, that the Committee had been governed by a Departmental feeling of centralisation, and had been narrowly controlled by the Instruction of the House. Of course, it was impossible for him to say who would compose the Committee in the future, or who would be Chairman of it, and he did not know whether notice would be taken of the suggestion of his hon. Friend, that there should be a larger representation of Members representing Municipalities on the Committee; but he ventured to point out this simple fact in connection with the previous Instruction—that all the House of Commons had done hitherto, and all the Committee did last Session, was to decline to allow any changes in the law to be effected in cases where the existing Statutes had been recently passed. Undoubtedly, it would be a serious thing if the Debate had been

allowed to pass without a single word being said against the impression which had been conveyed to the House, that because the Instruction moved last year and the year before was not moved this year, therefore the Committee, however composed, was to understand that it was not to be governed by that Instruction. He did not know whether his hon. Friend the Member for Islington had actually in mind what the Instruction was; but he ventured to repudiate the idea that there had been on the part of the Committee any attempt at centralisation, or any inclination to give into the representations or recommendations of Government Departments. He could show that on many occasions the Committee did give special powers to the Local Authorities, when they were able to show that their local circumstances made it absolutely necessary that there should be some small changes in the existing law; but the House would agree that it would be intolerable if a small Committee sitting upstairs were to allow the law to be extended, curtailed, or materially altered, when the House as a whole had within the four or five years dealt with the identical subject in a comprehensive way, and had declared what the intentions of the Legislature were on that subject. To allow anything like that would be throwing on a small Committee a very great and serious responsibility; and he, for one, would feel himself absolutely unable to serve on the Committee if it had to accept that very onerous task, which properly belonged to the House, and of which the House could not divest itself. He thought it his duty to say so much, because if it were his fortune to be on the Committee again this year he should not like his hon. Friend to think that, because he had allowed the matter to pass in silence, he had acquiesced in the suggestion that the action of the House in not moving an Instruction relieved the Committee from the course it had taken up last year, which was supported by every Committee, and was not desirable in the interests of well-conducted legislation. He would, however, suggest that the quorum be reduced from five to three, as on some occasions there had been a delay and inconvenience caused to witnesses through the failure of the required number of Members turning up early.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) thought the Committee should have access, more than hitherto, to the Reports made to the Local Government Board with regard to these particular measures when they dealt with the law as it existed. In fact, he thought all Members of the House ought to have no difficulty whatever in getting access to such Reports.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, that as he had been for six years a Member of the Sanitary and Police Committee, he might be permitted to say a few words on the Motion. His hon. Friend had made some reference to what was known as the adoptive Acts. Those Acts had been passed because in their absence the labours of the Police and Sanitary Committee had become almost crushing. The subject-matter of many of those adoptive Acts came before the Committee in a most perfect form; every one of their clauses had been fully discussed; and the body of adoptive Acts presented the result of the most careful consideration in such a form that any Local Authority might adopt one or all of those Acts, and have the advantage of that body of legislation. He was sure it would be a great injury to Public Health Bills if the whole subject were thrown again, as during former years, in a confused shape before the Committee. He was sure that legislation would be less satisfactory than at this moment, and that the duties of the Committee would become so formidable that no Committee could possibly undertake them. He hoped the Police and Sanitary Committee would act in a thoroughly independent spirit. It was their duty to stand between the Departments and the public and to investigate the recommendations of those who appeared before the Committee. Sometimes they must decide in favour of the promoters, sometimes in favour of the objectors, and sometimes in favour of the Departments, but they should proceed from first to last in a judicial spirit and, guided by the arguments, decide according to the facts as they arose. He believed good work would continue to be done by the Committee if the adoptive Acts were not interfered with, but if they were private legislation would sink into chaos.

MR. WHITELEY (Stockport) said, that with the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean and the hon. Member for South Islington he had been requested by the Association of Municipal Corporations to support their complaint on this point. He could assure the House that great injury and injustice had been done the Municipalities by the manner in which their Bills had been mutilated by the Police and Sanitary Committee. He ventured to hope that that would not occur again. It was local action which the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Long) had referred to on the part of the Municipal Corporations of the Kingdom which had resulted in the building up of the Statutes.

MR. W. LONG (interrupting) said, he had referred to proposals to deal with subjects which had been dealt with by Parliament within the past three or four years. The hon. Member's statement was based on existing Acts of Parliament passed before the general law was laid down. It did not refer to recent Acts—those of 1889 and 1892.

MR. WHITELEY said, they were the re-enactments and consolidation of the existing law.

MR. W. LONG: No, no.

MR. WHITELEY said, that at any rate he ventured to hope that Municipal Corporations would not have this injury done to them during the present Session.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that objection had been made that hon. Members had not access to the Local Government Board Reports. The Local Government Board would have no objection to the Sanitary and Police Committee having access to these Reports.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

UNDER THE WHITE ENSIGN.

MR. MUNTZ (Warwickshire, Tamworth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, as a general rule, the wearing of the white ensign is reserved to Her Majesty's ships alone, or whether the Admiralty are in the habit of granting warrants to private persons authorising them to wear the white

ensign on private ships; whether such warrant are personal to those to whom they are granted, and whether they authorise the wearing of the white ensign by the ship in the absence therefrom of the person named in the warrant; whether these warrants are granted to such persons on account of their personal position or public services; or, if not, on what other grounds; whether they are ever granted to other persons than British subjects; whether any misapprehension or inconvenience has arisen at the Dardanelles or elsewhere abroad through the wearing of the white ensign by private ships causing them to be taken for British men of war; and whether the Admiralty will consider the propriety of refraining henceforth from issuing warrants to private persons to wear the white ensign, and of withdrawing those warrants already issued?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The white ensign is, as a general rule, reserved for Her Majesty's ships, and warrants are not granted to private persons. The exceptional privilege enjoyed by the Royal Yacht Squadron was conferred on that Club in 1829 by a general warrant, and a personal warrant is issued to each yacht owner in the Club who is a British subject for his convenience; this warrant neither authorises nor forbids the wearing of the white ensign when the owner is not on board. As a special case, the German Emperor was granted a warrant in July, 1891, as owner of a yacht in the Royal Yacht Squadron. In 1883 Lord Annesley's yacht, the *Seabird*, was detained by the Turkish Authorities at the Dardanelles consequent on her wearing the white ensign, Lord Annesley being a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. On account of this, all yacht owners were warned that should they wish to pass the Dardanelles under the white or blue ensigns they must first obtain an Imperial Iradé, otherwise they were recommended to wear the plain red ensign. There is no intention of taking action in the sense suggested by the final paragraph of the question.

OCCASIONAL LICENCES.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department

whether he is aware that the Dover Magistrates have been in the habit of granting occasional licences for the sale of liquor and permitting such sale after 10 p.m. on occasions other than a public dinner or ball; and that, on a recent occasion, such an occasional licence having been granted for a smoking concert, the local Inland Revenue authority took exception to the sale after 10 o'clock p.m., as being contrary to the Acts of Parliament; and, on communication with the Board of Inland Revenue, was instructed not to interfere but to fill up the licence in accordance with the Justices' consent; and, if the facts be as above stated, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): By the Act 26 & 27 Vict., c. 33, s. 20, a person having obtained an occasional licence is permitted to sell excisable articles at any public dinner or ball during such hours as shall be allowed and specified in the consent given by the Justice of the Peace for the granting of such occasional licence. The Commissioners of Inland Revenue, acting in the spirit of this section, extend this privilege to the holder of an occasional licence for any other form of entertainment or amusement upon the production of a Justice's consent specifying the hours within which it is desired to sell excisable articles. But I would suggest that this is a matter affecting the Treasury rather than the Home Office.

TITHE TROUBLES IN SOUTH WALES.

MR. GRIFFITH - BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the disorderly scenes which have recently been taking place in connection with the collection of tithe rent-charge in Cardiganshire and in other parts of South Wales; whether Mr. Robert Lewis, the County Court bailiff, was seriously assaulted on the 14th of March at Ffynonfadog, in the parish of Pembryn, when attempting to collect tithe, and whether any arrests have been made in connection with this outrage; will he explain why the police force protecting Lewis was suddenly withdrawn on the 18th of March, although the Chief Constable had undertaken to pro-

vide a force until the 23rd, and also the number of orders of the Newcastle-Emlyn County Court for tithe rent-charge which are now unexecuted; whether he is aware that a series of night attacks have been made on the vicarage of Llanfychangel Rhosycorn, in the course of which a valuable horse belonging to the vicar has been cruelly mutilated; whether any arrests have been made in connection with this outrage; and what steps he proposes to take to restore law and order to this part of the country?

MR. ASQUITH: I have received Reports from time to time on the disorderly proceedings in connection with the collection of tithe rent-charge in Cardiganshire and other parts of South Wales. Mr. Robert Lewis, County Court bailiff, was twice assaulted, but, as I am informed, not seriously, on March 14 at Ffynonfadog while attempting to collect tithe. The assailants were well known to the police, who thought it more advisable not to arrest them, but to proceed by summons. It is true that a verbal arrangement had been made with the bailiff for the continuance of police protection until March 22, but it was found necessary to withdraw the protection temporarily after the 17th, after due notice had been given, as applications had been received for protection from the bailiffs of another County Court, and the presence of an unusual number of police was required in another part of the county. The Chief Constable will shortly be again in a position to give assistance if required. There are, I am informed, 118 unexecuted orders for distress, and 87 orders under Sub-section 3 of Section 2 of the Tithe Act, 1891. I am informed that on four separate occasions damage was done by parties of men in the stables of the vicarage named, including the cutting of the hair from the tail of a horse; and although no arrests have yet been made, the offenders are believed to be known, and it is hoped will shortly be brought to justice. I understand that the village named is in Carmarthenshire, not in Cardiganshire; and I am further informed that these outrages have nothing to do with the collection of tithe rent-charge; and the vicarage is now protected. I have given a good deal of time and attention to the state of things in this county, and have endeavoured by

personal interviews with the different authorities concerned to bring about a more harmonious and effective co-operation between them. I gather from the latest Reports that there has been substantial improvement in the facility with which the law is executed. The main difficulty lies, as I have often pointed out, in the defective character of the remedy which the Act of Parliament provides.

DR. GRIGSBY.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the Report of the examination of the Directors of the Solicitors Government Trust Company by the Official Receiver on 19th February; and whether Dr. Grigsby is to resume his duties as Judge in Cyprus?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Secretary of State has carefully considered Dr. Grigsby's case; and, on a review of all the circumstances before him, he arrived at the conclusion that Dr. Grigsby should be allowed to resume his duties.

COMPULSORY RETIREMENT IN QUEEN'S COLLEGES.

MR. PINKERTON (Galway): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of certain legal difficulties in the interpretation of the Order in Council prescribing compulsory retirement at 65, it has been decided to apply the principle of the Order to the Queen's Colleges and Queen's Letters; whether all officials now in office have been exempted from the operation of the Queen's Letters; will he explain why this exemption has been made, seeing that it is in direct conflict with the recommendation of the Royal Commission, which states that compulsory retirement at a specified age is absolutely necessary; with the Report of the Committee of Public Accounts, which states that such a Rule is absolutely necessary in the case of the Queen's Colleges; and with the opinion of the Treasury expressed in 1891, and then concurred in by the Lord-Lieutenant, that the Rule should be applied to the Colleges; and whether payments out of Parliamentary Votes

have been, or will be, made to those officials disqualified by age?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HERRERT, Oldham): The Government are anxious to prevent the Presidents and Professors of the Queen's Colleges from continuing to hold office after they have become by age or infirmity less competent for the performance of their important and responsible duties. The Law Officers of the Crown in Ireland have, however, advised that the Presidents and Professors are not within the terms of the Order in Council of August 13, 1890, and that the retirement of the present holders on the ground of age, or the discontinuance of payments from the Vote of Parliament to which they are entitled, cannot be enforced under the terms of the Order. As regards the future, the Irish Government has undertaken to make it a condition of appointment in every case that the appointee shall retire at the age of 65, with an extension of not more than five years in any case in which the Treasury is satisfied that an earlier retirement would be detrimental to the interests of the Public Service.

THE NAVAL RESERVE.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether Her Majesty's ships *Superb* and *Galatea* have now returned from their cruise to Shetland for the purpose of training the Naval Reserve there; what number of men of the Naval Reserve have undergone the course of training in each of these ships respectively; and what has been the cost to the country of sending these ships on this duty?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: These ships have not visited Shetland. The *Galatea* has returned from Lerwick, and the *Superb* from Stornoway. Only four men of the Naval Reserve have undergone the course of training in the *Galatea*, and none in the *Superb*. This is the first year of an experiment new to the men. Unfortunately, the season turned out to be inopportune, and the inducements offered seem not to have been considered sufficient to make the men volunteer. This service has entailed no additional expense to the country, the cost of the fuel expended being covered by the amount provided in the

Mr. Asquith

Estimates for the ordinary cruising of these ships.

ACCIDENTS TO RAILWAY SERVANTS.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will consider the advisability of requiring Railway Companies, in making Returns of accidents to railway servants under Section 6 of the Act of 1871, to state whether an injury arising from an accident is of a temporary or permanent character; and whether, in the latter case, he will in future direct Railway Companies to send in, after a suitable interval, further Returns showing the then condition of the injured railway servant, and stating whether the injury has resulted in permanent disablement?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (MR. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I have appointed a Committee to consider the question of the Accident Returns, and the points raised by my hon. Friend shall receive the consideration of that Committee.

THE TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

MR. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he expects to receive the Report of the Departmental Committee upon the working of the Telegraph Department at an early date?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The Committee, I am informed, are now considering their Report, and I have reason to believe that it will be in my hands in a few weeks. I ought to add, however, that the Committee, which was mainly intended to inquire into the possibility of introducing economy into the Service, will report for the information and guidance of the Department, and it is not consequently certain that their Report will be one which can properly be laid before Parliament.

PASSENGER FARES ON THE LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY.

MR. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company's ordinary first and second-class passenger

maxima were raised $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per mile by the Act (Local and Personal) of 1868, c. 134; that these maxima are higher than those of the London and North-Western Railway Company and many other Companies; that the Company runs more trains without third-class carriages attached than all the other railways of England put together; and that competition with the South Eastern Railway Company is precluded by an agreement sanctioned by the Act of 1890, c. 39; and whether he will undertake to introduce a clause in the Company's Bill now before Parliament which shall provide for a return to the Company's former passenger maxima, and also for the carriage of third-class passengers by all the Company's trains?

MR. MUNDELLA: The Board of Trade have not received complaints as to the manner in which the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway manage their passenger traffic. I am not prepared to introduce a clause into a Bill of a particular Company to repeal fares which have already received the sanction of Parliament. To compel this Company to carry third-class passengers by all trains would impair the facilities, both as to expedition and cost, afforded by the Company to the public.

ANTHRAX.

MR. FELLOWES (Hunts, Ramsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the recommendation made by the Central Chamber of Agriculture last November, and by other Agricultural Bodies, that Local Authorities should be empowered, in the case of the death of an animal from anthrax, to award to the owner the market value of the carcase (not to exceed £1), has been adopted; and, if not, whether he will state the objection, if any, to its adoption as a means of securing early notice of outbreaks of the disease? At the same time, I may ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of the greatly-increased prevalence of anthrax and the serious consequences of the disease not only to live stock, but in some cases to human beings also, he is prepared to appoint a Departmental Committee to consider how far it is possible to adopt further measures for its prevention?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The recommendation to which the hon. Member refers could not be carried out without legislation; but, in any case, I do not think its adoption would be of any material assistance in preventing the spreading of disease. I cannot conveniently state the objections to the proposal within the limits of an answer to a question; but if the hon. Member will communicate with me personally I shall be happy to explain them to him, and I may also refer him to the letter I addressed to the Central Chamber of Agriculture on the subject on the 22nd of November last. With regard to the suggestion for the appointment of a Departmental Committee, which the hon. Member makes in a separate question on the subject, I shall be happy to consider whether such an inquiry would be of advantage; but I wish, in the first instance, to be in possession of certain Reports for which I have called respecting the feasibility of inoculation for anthrax, and as to the measures adopted in foreign countries to prevent the spreading of the disease.

CLASSIFICATION IN THE DOCKYARDS.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state whether the system of classification has been abolished in Her Majesty's Dockyards?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee) (who replied) said: If the hon. Member will refer to page 5 of Parliamentary Paper, 429, he will find a list of the trades in which classification has been abolished.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN: Then, is the announcement which has appeared in the papers incorrect?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: No fresh additions have been made since last year.

BANDS IN THE ROYAL PARKS.

MR. AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if arrangements can be made for bands to play in the Royal Parks, similar to the arrangements made by the County Council in the Parks under their control, on Saturday afternoons and on general holidays?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): Arrangements have been made under which bands play at certain times in Hyde Park, Regent's Park, and Greenwich Park. The expenses are defrayed by private effort, as no public money is provided for the purpose. I am in full sympathy with the object of the hon. Member, and will see what more can be done.

BOARD OF TRADE RULES.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Rules made by the Board of Trade, and laid upon the Table of this House on the 13th of March last, were prepared and advised upon by a committee of 15 persons constituted as required by "The Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Act, 1888," or, if not, how and by whom they were prepared and advised upon?

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir.

GAME LAW PROSECUTIONS AT DINGWALL.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he is aware that, in the case of trespass for game tried on the 13th February last before Sheriff Hill, at Dingwall, in which Baron Middleton, of Applecross, was the plaintiff, and William Mackenzie, Ardnasaskan, was defendant, the only witness for the prosecution was a game watcher named Macbeath, who admitted that his knowledge of English was very limited, while Sheriff Hill, who sentenced Mackenzie, had no knowledge of Gaelic; and whether there is any interpreter attached to the Court House at Dingwall; if not, whether it is proposed to engage the services of competent interpreters at those places where Sheriffs are ignorant of the language of the people?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): I am informed that Macbeath was the only witness in this case, but that it is not the fact that his knowledge of English was very limited; that, on the contrary, he was examined and cross-examined in English—which he spoke quite easily—and that it was never suggested, either by himself or by the agent

of the accused, that he should be examined in Gaelic. There is no interpreter attached to the Court House at Dingwall, but the Sheriff Clerk Depute, or some other competent person, is employed to act as interpreter in the comparatively rare cases in which an interpreter is required.

THE BLACKWATER FISHERY.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, as it is doubtful if the "culch" in the Blackwater, Essex, is Crown property, and as action calculated to lead to riot is being taken by the Tolleshbury fishermen against the Burnham dredgers for removing it, he will protect the Burnham men in the exercise of rights hitherto admittedly legal, and which are necessary to them in the conduct of their trade?

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon): Could not these public fishing-grounds be protected by putting in force the Crown rights?

MR. MUNDELLA: Whatever may be the merits of the claims involved in this case, it is not within the province of the Board of Trade to determine them. The protection of those who may be disturbed in the exercise of legal rights is a matter for the police, and I understand that proceedings before Magistrates are now pending.

MR. DODD: Has the right hon. Gentleman taken the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on the subject?

MR. MUNDELLA: I believe that has been done.

CROWN ESTATES.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he will undertake that on the Crown Estates, so far as is consistent with the requirements of the farms, the cottages of the labourers shall be held direct from the Crown?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HUBBERT, Oldham) (who replied) said: As stated in the Report of 1890 from the Select Committee on the Woods and Forests, the present practice of the Commissioner of Woods, &c., is to let to the farmers such cottages as are necessary for their farms, and any others not so required

would be usually let by the Commissioner direct to labourers or artisans.

MR. YERBURGH gave notice that he would on another occasion address to the right hon. Gentleman a question dealing with assertions made in a certain publication on this subject.

THE SALTCOATS CROFTER SETTLEMENTS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has yet had an opportunity of conferring with Sir Charles Tupper on the grievances of the Saltcoats (Canada) Crofter Settlers; and, if so, will he state the result?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow Bridgeton): I have conferred with Sir Charles Tupper since his return from Canada. Sir Charles Tupper is preparing a Report on the Crofter Settlements in that country, which will be presented to Parliament in due course.

MEAT IMPORTS.

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is now able to announce the result of his consultation with the President of the Board of Trade in regard to American and foreign meat imports; and whether any steps will be taken by these Departments to enforce the laws framed to protect British producers and consumers from fraudulent trading?

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): At the same time, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, having regard to the Report of a Committee of the House of Lords on the marking of foreign meat, Her Majesty's Government will take steps with the object of preventing the fraudulent practice of selling foreign meat as meat of home production, whereby great injustice is done to farmers, particularly to those in the North of Scotland?

MR. H. GARDNER: In reply to the hon. Baronet, and to my hon. Friend the Member for Elgin, I would say that as the result of the best consideration we have been able to give to this matter, we have come to the conclusion that the law as it stands ought to be sufficient to prevent fraudulent misrepresentation as to origin in the case of meat,

and what I would suggest is that home producers should utilise their various Organisations with a view to bring under the notice of my right hon. Friend cases in which there is evidence to show that the Merchandise Marks Acts have been infringed, or themselves take action in the same way as the Bacon Curer's Association have recently done so successfully. The Board of Trade have the power to prosecute in cases in which the general interests of a section of the community or of a trade are affected; but the Board of Trade cannot exercise this power unless they are moved to do so in specific instances.

SIR H. MAXWELL: Are these recommendations intended to apply to such feeders as the crofters of the Western Highlands and the farmers of Aberdeenshire?

MR. H. GARDNER: There are such bodies as the Highland and Agricultural Society, which can take up the matter.

RAILWAY COMMUNICATION IN ROSS-SHIRE.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is now prepared to give effect to the conditional promise made by the late right hon. W. H. Smith, M.P., to provide for the development of railway communication on the western mainland of Ross-shire?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have nothing to add to the answer which I gave on March the 9th last year.

MR. WEIR: Will the Government appoint a Committee to consider the question, as was done by the late Government?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Government see no occasion for appointing another Committee.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, considering the labours now devolving upon the Chair of this House, he will consider the desirability of appointing a Deputy Speaker in addition to the Chairman of Committees?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Government have had the matter under consideration, but have formed no opinion on it.

Mr. H. Gardner

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, that his Motion for the appointment of a Committee to consider and report upon the procedure, practice, and forms of the House was dictated not by party, but purely by business considerations. Some such Committees had been previously formed, and there was an impression that their proceedings had not been fruitful, but, after a careful comparison of their proposals with the present Standing Orders of the House, he had come to the conclusion that many of their suggestions had proved valuable, and had been incorporated with advantage in the law of Parliament. Moreover, time had now elapsed, and some of the recommendations of such Committees, which, when made, had been in advance of public opinion, might now with advantage be reconsidered in the light of more recent experience. And he was also of opinion that, but for what such Committees had effected, the present state of Parliamentary business might have been much worse than it was. Such experience showed that business in the House of Commons had become more and more congested, and one of the Committees had reported that this feature of Parliamentary life would be likely to increase rather than diminish. There were now more speakers, and the Sessions were longer; indeed, it might be said that there were practically no vacations, and that Parliament had been for nearly 18 months in almost permanent Session. Yet, notwithstanding this sacrifice on the part of Members, the promises of Parliament were being less and less fulfilled. The programmes of Governments on each side of the House were but slightly carried into effect. The list of promises was long—of performances, extremely short. And in the case of non-official Members, the proportion of performances was almost infinitesimal, inasmuch as during last Session 309 such measures were introduced, while only 23 were passed. Even for the completion of the

financial work of the year, the Government had been dependent upon the courtesy of the Opposition, and, while such cordial relations had an excellent effect on business, they could not be relied upon amid the stress of Party feeling. Yet Governments were constantly promising what it must be known could not be performed, and thus public opinion was greatly misled and public misapprehension produced. Equally, non-official Members were encouraged by the existing Rules to what he would call trying their luck at legislation. Some hundreds ballotted for the chances, and yet it was well known that, under the circumstances of the most favourable Session, only 10 or 15 places were worth having, and this year there were not more than five. Yet Members gave their time, and the time of the public, to the ballot. They remained midnight after midnight on the off-chance of passing a Bill, notwithstanding the fact that, even if they were successful in the ballot, nevertheless, if the measure was opposed, it could not possibly pass through all its stages in the House of Commons, as was indicated in the case of the Sites for Public Worship Bills of the last Session. Hence, there was a strong and growing feeling both inside and outside the House of Commons that, if Parliamentary institutions were not to be endangered, there must be some change—some reform. The Prime Minister himself, in his recent speech at Edinburgh, frankly admitted, and, indeed, invited such proposals. The Prime Minister was, beyond doubt, sincere in this, and meant what he said. Moreover, he expressed a general public feeling, and he impressed upon the Government the duty on this occasion of following their own Prime Minister's recommendation by helping forward this Motion both in the House and in Committee. What, then, were the chief evils and their causes? They were: pressure of Parliamentary work out of all proportion to Parliamentary time, the want of business-like economy in dealing with that time, and the ever-present and all-pervading element of chance and uncertainty. It might not be possible to eliminate chance entirely, but he protested against making it, as they did, a principle of action. For instance, non-official Members' Bills and Motions, which had been useful in the past as

themes of discussions, and as suggestions, and which, in many cases, had been carried into legislation with the best effect, were subjected to a series of chances and uncertainties. The first chance was the ballot itself. Was there always "a survival of the fittest" Bills? Some were good, but sometimes Wednesdays were wasted by talk on proposals which had no chance whatever of becoming law, which were even talked upon to stave-off more important propositions, and which were sometimes put down with that very object, to which, unfortunately, the forms of the House too often lent themselves. This was the real origin of the Bill - Syndicates, which, though irregular, had at least the excuse of being organisations to forward the more important measures. Again, on Tuesdays and Fridays Motions were often dealt with in just the same way, and, as a result, they had those "counts-out" which often destroyed an evening's work when it was too late to devote the time to any other purpose, one remedy for which would be to count out a useless Motion, instead of the House, and then to proceed to the next Order. The second chance was the prospect that Governments might at any moment take the whole time of the House, indeed often Government work was so pressing that they must have it. Governments were always on the "pounce" for this purpose, as they were thought to be even last night. And, thirdly, when Bills came on at midnight, their being taken, even if entirely non-contentious, was still a matter of the greatest doubt. He admitted the objections to late Sitings; he himself had had no reason to complain; indeed, he acknowledged the courtesy of the House in permitting the passing of so many of his own Bills, and, personally, he was as much opposed as anyone to unduly late Sitings, except for the formal passage of unopposed, or, as he would rather call them, uncontroversial Bills. If there was a real objection to them he had nothing to say, but he had gathered from a recent exclamation, as well as from Members themselves, that there were some on his side of the House who were opposed to all such legislation. He understood this feeling, though he did not share it, but, on the contrary, considered that legislation had advanced, and might more advance, the welfare of the

people. Moreover, the Standing Orders contemplated the passage after 12 o'clock of uncontentious Bills, and he certainly objected to all progress being stopped by the simple words, on the part of a single Member, of "I object," especially when the objecting Member had not even read the Bill. He therefore proposed, though only suggestively, and, as in all cases, for the consideration of the Committee, that an effort should be made to reduce the elements of chance and caprice, and to secure more certainty, and that this might be effected by some system of selection in favour of the Bills which were relatively the more important and useful.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: How?

SIR A. ROLLIT: Well, it might be done in many ways, one of which was by Members undersigning the Bills which they approved upon a list in the Library, on the same principle as they now backed them. Or, by requiring more than one, say 10, Members to give notice of opposition, as had been suggested by the hon. Member for Rushcliffe, and, indeed, the Speaker had already effected an improvement, which he heartily acknowledged, in giving time to Members to disarm opposition by a few words in explanation of their Bills. And there were other ways in which time might be saved and obstacles removed. There was what was called "obstruction," which came from both sides of the House, and which he need not define. With such dilatory tactics he had no sympathy, though he had no objection whatever to deliberate discussion, for which time must be gained by the removal of obstruction. St. Paul had said, "the strength of sin is the law," and the strength of obstruction was the present law of Parliament. The remedy was to strike at inducements to, and at the motives of, obstruction. For example, even now, if the Twelve o'clock Rule were suspended, merely *in terrorem*, the effect was magical, because Members knew that the time must come at some period of the early morning when there must be an end of the discussion. Consequently, they obstructed no longer, and generally all was over by midnight. It was the same

with that somewhat barbarous instrument the guillotine. When once applied it was effective, but its application involved debate, in which time was often lost rather than gained, and in the Party struggle the merits were often wholly lost sight of. Hence, the guillotine was injurious, but there was very much to be said for producing its effect beforehand, and that considerably and impartially, by allotting a certain time to sections of a Bill, and to the Bill itself, through the action of the Speaker, aided by a Committee, such as the Committee of Selection. By this means, discussions would be devoted to the main points of measures, instead of often leaving them wholly unconsidered. But perhaps it might be necessary to take some securities for points developed during the Debate, by giving power to the Speaker to extend the time; indeed, he was in favour himself of giving much greater powers to the Chairman, as in the case of other public assemblies. Moreover, if the limitation of the time prevented some points being discussed, there were still many other stages in which this might be remedied. Again, suggestively, the carrying over and on from one Session to another of Bills in progress, upon a Resolution moved by the Minister or Member in charge, might prevent their destruction and the consequent waste of public time, and remove a great incentive to Party obstruction. The last long Session of nearly 18 months showed that Sessions were, after all, only arbitrary divisions of time, and an incidental advantage would be the limitation of the necessity for the Closure. The Chambers of Commerce had resolved 10 times in favour of thus carrying over Bills, and again this year; and they had been actuated by the yearly fate of such an important industrial measure as the Bill for Exempting Machinery and Tools from Rating, a subject which had received attention in most competing countries. This Bill had several times passed its Second Reading, and early last Session by a majority of 173, yet it never got further. Lord Salisbury had said that the practice of measures dying with each Session was as sensible as that of a business man who should annually destroy and recommence all his unfinished correspondence; and out of the 15 National Assemblies of Europe 12, and also the United States, had adopted the more

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modern practice he had suggested, which had vindicated itself by experience. Much, too, might be said for similarly carrying over measures from day to day, as in other public assemblies, as being likely to get more omnibuses to their journey's end instead of their jostling each other to pieces by overcrowding Temple Bar. Again, much more devolution was wanted. Private Bill legislation ought to be delegated to Commissions or to the Town and County Councils, and at the last meeting of the Chambers of Commerce—which were formed of business men and men versed in public life—the voices from every part of Ireland—from Belfast to Dublin and Cork and from all political Parties—from Scotland and from England, were universally favourable to at least this form of business-like Home Rule. These views he urged in the Debate on Scotch Committees last night, and he would now only add that the Estimates might well go to a Standing Committee. The time in Supply was greatly increasing, owing very much to the encroachments by the Government on the time of non-official Members, who were forced to take this opportunity of airing and redressing grievances. Thus, in 1869 the Civil Service Estimates were in Committee of Supply for 16 days, and in 1887 for 31 days; and this rate was progressive. True, in Supply, attention was given not only to finance, but also to points of policy and administration, and this was of value. But such discussion was desultory; the reductions of expenditure were utterly inadequate to the period expended on them; and, as the Secretary for India had said, there was a waste of public time to little or no purpose in preventing a waste of public money. Through a Committee there would be real revision of expenditure; the officials might be examined; and the saving of time in Supply would give much greater opportunities of raising Motions for redress directly, and for securing their regular and adequate discussion. There was, indeed, already a plethora of such opportunities in the various stages of Supply—on first going into Committee, on the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, on Votes on Account—when discussion was most discursive, as it was on Supplementary Estimates and on the various stages of the Appropriation Bill,

and also on Report of Supply. Surely all this was more than sufficient, if the time were economically and profitably used. And, indeed, the Committee of 1886 had recommended that every Public Bill should be referred to a Standing Committee (as was generally the case in the Lords), and that in one of such several Committees the Bills of non-official Members should have precedence, the Committees meeting on Thursdays and Fridays in the day time, and the House at 9 in the evening. These were all matters worth the consideration of a Committee, as were some of the technicalities, and what he might call the anachronisms, as well as the many anomalies, of present Parliamentary procedure. To learn that procedure was almost the work of a lifetime, which no business man could give, and the practice ought to be simplified and more closely adapted to modern life and to the procedure of other Public Bodies. For instance, there were the ancient forms in introducing Bills. These had been recently somewhat shortened and improved, but the discussion of the subject had consumed much of the time of the House, and the result had shown that there was still need for more consideration and change. After the ballot Members had to march to the Bar, just as they did two centuries ago.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Hear, hear.

SIR A. ROLLIT: Yes, but in the reign of William and Mary time was more plentiful than now; and the rule was frequently broken by Members not going to the Bar at all, but only a yard or two from their places, and then countermarching to the Table. Next, the Order Paper, carefully prepared though it was by the Speaker and the Clerks, was dictated by ancient precedents. Once, no doubt from its name, it indicated the actual order of business, but now it was almost misleading to any but those who were experts in Parliamentary procedure. Then, the recent discussions of Lords Amendments showed that the system was cumbersome and restrictive of those opportunities for the adjustment of differences between the Houses which ought always to be effected, for the sake of both and of the country,

if at all possible without sacrifice of principle. The reasons given for Amendments, compiled in a sham Committee meeting held behind the Chair, were often the very worst reasons, only worthy of such a mock proceeding; and the obstacles to conferences were such as to practically prevent them. Such a proceeding on Privilege as that of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington the other day—

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I raised it to test the validity of the Rules.

*SIR A. ROLLIT: I only need to say that the noble Lord raised it, not why he raised it, and I was going to thank him for having shown that the Sessional Order against Peers taking part in elections was an annual sham; as was the like Order of the House threatening Members with every severity for bribery and corruption, which was obsolete now that, by the Act of the right hon. Member for Bury, the House's judicial jurisdiction was delegated to the Judges, the annual Order being merely a relic of a procedure which was once a real one, but is no longer so, and one which could now hardly be constitutionally placed in operation. Lastly, the process as to Petitions was almost a misleading of the public. The Press even did not now notice them, as it once did. They were seldom if ever read; they were plunged into the dark profundity of a bag behind the Chair; and yet it was discovered the other night upon the Estimates that the cost of counting these Petitions was some hundreds a year, and the cost of printing what was seldom, if ever, read might be some thousands. He would be the last to propose to abrogate the ancient and once useful right of public petition, but he did propose to reform and make it real, and to put an end to an idle form and a useless expenditure. Other Committees had sat, and done good work, but experience was constantly extending. New conditions and circumstances affected the House like other institutions, and, with a view to the speedy and efficient despatch of public business—for public time was not their own, but the nation's—it was necessary that the House should possess itself of the most effective means of conducting its business and proceedings. Hon. Members were

there in the performance of great public duties, at great cost of both time and money; they occupied both public time and attention; and anything in their forms and procedure which detracted from the public estimation of their services or tended to create misapprehension ought to be ended. He therefore asked the House, which had been indulgent, to agree with him that there were grounds for inquiry, consideration, and report by a Select Committee, and to take the opportunity of more economically utilising public time, of lessening what might be a source even of some danger to the State, and of adding to the usefulness and dignity of Parliamentary institutions. The hon. Member concluded by moving for a Select Committee.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Forest of Dean): There was one expression which fell from my hon. Friend in respect of which the noble Lord (Lord R. Churchill) opposite dissented. He said there was a strong and general feeling in the House and outside the House with regard to the cumbersome methods of procedure which we adopt. The noble Lord dissented, and I must say I share his dissent, because I do not agree with my hon. Friend, whose Motion I second, that there is any strong feeling within this House as to our cumbersome proceedings. No one can be found in Parliament to contend that our Forms and our way of using them are perfect, and outside the House of Commons there is an almost unanimous agreement that they are disgracefully bad. If it is necessary to offer any proof of this statement I would give, for example, the mode of moving the adjournment of the House, and so bringing some unexpected subject, not however generally (as was intended) of a sudden nature, but often such as would bear postponement, before the House, in lieu of the business appointed for the day. This was never intended when the Form was devised to meet emergency. Then, again, there is the consideration of Estimates. We now debate the early Votes every year on every Vote on Account and on the main Vote far too fully, and we do not debate the later Votes at all. Then, again, there is the period of the year for the Sittings

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of the House. The theory is that we sit during the season, and Members take their houses upon that theory. The practice is beginning to be that we sit all the year round, and I venture to prophesy that in the present year, if the Government survive the Budget, we shall sit, as we did last year, throughout the autumn. There is a great deal of chance about our proceedings which gives a portion of our time to the Government, the organised opposition being able to select another portion—but only for the sterile purpose of moving Votes of Censure, while private Members are left to the chance of a chance, to individualism run mad—a single Member by the luck of the ballot obtaining the time which he may mis-spend. Our Forms are not business-like. The Assembly is less business-like than any County Council or Town Council in the country; and the democracy, or, to be precise, the new voters, enfranchised in 1867 and 1885, have never had the smallest sympathy with us in our inability to transact our work. One of their Representatives in this House, the hon. Member for Battersea, in a most able recent speech upon this subject in London, took a view which is almost exactly similar to that of the most experienced of our Chairmen of Committees, my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bodmin Division of Cornwall, and to the view taken by those very experienced gentlemen the Clerks at the Table, as expressed in the evidence of two of them before several Select Committees, and in the suggestions which have been made by Mr. Milman at various times. There was only one point in which I myself differed from my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea, as there is no point in which I differ from the gentlemen at the Table and from my right hon. Friend. I am content, in the great difficulty of selecting arbiters of our proceedings, to fully trust the Speaker of the House from time to time, as he is both the choice of the whole House and the natural protector of every minority. It is much easier, however, to point out the extent of the disease than to bring about agreement upon the remedy. The various Committees which have sat have made many suggestions which have not been adopted, besides those which have. The Committee of 1886 suggested that

every Bill should go to a Standing Committee unless otherwise ordered, and accompanied this proposal to divide the whole House into Standing Committees by suggestions, which I believe had the great authority of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin, for getting rid of that private business which the House no longer transacts as well as it once did. The Committee of 1888 appeared to share the views of the Committee of 1886, but also desired that the Estimates, or at least certain Classes and certain Votes on other Classes, should go to Grand Committee. The Committee of 1890 made suggestions which were far less unanimous than those of the Committees of 1886 and 1888, for they were carried against the Liberal Party, I myself agreeing with the majority of the Committee and not with my Party upon the subject, and they were for the carrying over of Bills. Since 1890 we have had a complete breakdown of Committee Closure, which it has been found impracticable to make use of in the manner which was undoubtedly intended by the House, and I say this as a strong friend of Closure, which I have supported for a great number of years, whichever Party was in power. But here I speak for myself only. To me it seems (although holding extreme views I am generally in a minority) that the House should be looked upon as a place of business, and not as a place of display, and that the democratic constituencies are far from agreeing with those in this House who look upon it mainly as an enjoyable arena of Debate. No one, I think, who was present throughout the proceedings in Committee on the Local Government Bill can think that they were wholly satisfactory, and, from my own experience of Select Committees and of Standing Committees, I cannot have a doubt but that the Bill would have emerged from Committee and come to the House on Report in a more workable form had it been examined by such tribunals, especially if there were power (which exists in most other countries) for the direct consultation by the Committee on technical points of the Government draftsman and experts. Against the evils of chance in private Members' time the private Members of the House have been fighting by means of syndicate balloting, a practice, however,

which has been condemned in the strongest terms from the Chair as a gross evasion of the Forms. This in itself seems to me a sufficient base for inquiry by a Committee. If we could agree upon nothing else than to make, on behalf of private Members of this House, practical proposals for the allocation of private Members' time by a reasonable system of preference as against chance, I think that there would be a full justification for our proceedings of to-day. The Leader of the House has declared in the House that he thinks syndicate balloting (but for the former condemnation of the Speaker) a useful means of expressing preference. We are at present working by a rough plan, and are obliged to use rough means on behalf of private Members for forcing on the Government those measures on which the largest numbers of us are agreed—such as the Miners' Eight Hours, for which we are going to obtain time this year. But surely it does not transcend the resources of our statesmanship to find apt and scientific means of doing that which we all wish to do. The Committee of 1888 dealt with this matter in its evidence, though, strictly speaking, it lay outside the scope of the Committee, which was on Estimates. The Committee went far beyond Estimates, and had placed before it plans of the gentlemen at the Table and of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bodmin Division of Cornwall, for underwriting Motions. Perhaps this is not the best form for carrying out our end, but surely we must all concur that power ought to be given to groups rather than to mere individuals—some proportion of the time to large groups, and some to small. There is a great deal to say for the view that half-a-dozen gentlemen ought to have their chance of bringing questions before Parliament. But in these days of pressure there is not much to say for the view that a single individual, who cannot obtain the support of any other, should be able to prevent business by monopolising its time; and at the present moment not only are private Members' days themselves an uncertain quantity, but success in the ballot is a chance upon a chance. Any power of the House to exhibit preference should apply to Bills as well as Motions. Some years ago, I think at the suggestion of one of the gentlemen at the

Table, I was able to induce Sir Stafford Northcote's Committee to adopt the plan which is now observed of giving a preference after Whitsuntide to the Bills which have passed through their first stages. This is the concession of the principle, and could easily be extended, and I have also seen a suggestion, which I believe also has the authority of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin, that we should do well to give a certain proportion of our Wednesdays to small and uncontentious Bills which have a reasonable chance of passing—Bills which would be allowed to remain in this class according to their freedom from unpopularity evinced by their not being under-written against. To sum up our suggestions, we press for the principle of preference by large groups and small groups of Members, as against the mere individual Member, and for the business aspect of the House against the show point of view.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the procedure, practice, and forms of the House and Committees."
—(*Sir A. Rollit.*)

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, that the right hon. Baronet opposite, like the hon. Member for Islington, had dealt entirely in paradox and generalities and had not descended to details. Though he had listened most attentively to the speeches just delivered he had been unable to discover that the subject had been treated by the speakers apart from generalities. He would deal for a moment, in the first place, with the statement of the hon. Member for Islington as to the private Members' Bills introduced last year. The hon. Member had stated that of 369 private Members' Bills introduced last year only about 20 had passed.

SIR A. ROLLIT: Twenty-three.

LORD R. CHURCHILL said, the hon. Member had left out a most important reason, which was the fact that the Home Rule Bill occupied 80 days, and that the rest of the Session was given up to Supply. How could 369 Bills, or any large proportion of them, have any chance in such a Session? The right hon. Baronet and the hon. Member said that the ballot operated unfavourably to legislation by private Members, and the former said that the country was largely

in favour of private Members' Bills being advanced and thought that the time allotted to private Members should be enlarged.

SIR A. ROLLIT, said, he must take exception to the noble Lord's statement; he was under an entire misapprehension as to what had really been said.

SIR C. W. DILKE also disclaimed the purport of the remarks attributed to him. He had said nothing of the kind, but that the system of procedure was most unworkmanlike.

LORD R. CHURCHILL said that, at all events, the general tendency of the two speeches was to impress upon the House that not only the House ought to be unanimous on this point, but that there was a strong feeling in the country about it. He had gone about the country a great deal—nobody went about the country more than he did last year—and he never met with anybody, any ordinary intelligent elector, who could explain what a private Members' Bill was. It was a most absurd name to give, and the ordinary elector had never heard of such a thing. The hon. Baronet had asserted that there was a strong popular feeling in favour of a great reform in the procedure of the House of Commons; but he questioned that statement from his own experience of public opinion. The hon. Member proposed that the range of discussion on the initiative of private Members should be enlarged by some process, which, however, he did not indicate. Personally, he held that the use of Bills introduced by private Members was this—and it had been slightly hinted at by the right hon. Baronet—that subjects should be brought under the notice of the House and pressed upon its attention from year to year, until finally, if the Bills were in fact wanted, if they were really wise Bills, both parties would take them up and they would ultimately be carried. He had known several instances of that having occurred. It was absolutely impossible for the Government nowadays to afford sufficient time for the discussion of private Members' Bills, even if their Bills were excellent, and nobody could devise a scheme which would enable them to do so. The present Government would very soon be compelled by the pressure of circumstances to make the usual raid on the time of private Mem-

bers, partly on account of the late period at which the Session opened, and partly on account of the immense amount of business to be got through. The hon. Member suggested that on the Opposition side of the House the feeling was unfavourable to private Members' legislation, but he would find that that statement was quite unfounded.

*SIR A. ROLLIT said, he was very reluctant to again interrupt the noble Lord, but he was not aware that he had said anything of the kind.

LORD R. CHURCHILL was alluding to the statement that an opinion was entertained on that side of the House that legislation was undesirable.

SIR A. ROLLIT assured the noble Lord that he had only said that an opinion was entertained by some Members on that side of the House. The noble Lord would, of course, accept his assurance.

LORD R. CHURCHILL would pass on. The right hon. Baronet wanted to supersede the Ballot. There was a good deal to be said for and against the Ballot, but it was rather odd that one of the most Radical Members of the House should wish to do without any system of ballot. A system of selection, however, might operate most unfairly on a minority. Whatever measures were adopted, the majority on a Committee would correspond with the majority in the House, and that majority would take care that the Bills of private Members in the minority should not proceed. That would be a very great hindrance to the equality of Members, and a great injustice; but the Ballot prevented that, for it gave everybody an equal chance; it gave the same chance to the minority as to the majority. They should not rashly and without thought adopt a proposal which would rule the House of Commons for it was impossible to say how many years. He pointed out that the procedure of the House of Commons had never been dealt with except under the Leaders of the Government, and generally with the support of the Opposition. He thought that some Committee had been appointed to consider the procedure of that House, and the character of those Committees was remarkable. They were composed of the most experienced Members of the House, but the Mover and Seconder of this Motion had given no

indication whatever as to who should constitute the proposed Committee. Nothing could be more dangerous than that Members not well acquainted, as some Members of the House could not be well acquainted, with the Rules and Forms of the House and with its general procedure should decide what their new Rules, if any were adopted, should be. No man was a stronger opponent of constant alteration of the Rules of Procedure than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian. That was his attitude up to last Session, when, no doubt, great alterations were made in order to pass the Home Rule Bill. Up to that time no one was more averse to the alteration of the Rules of the House than the right hon. Gentleman. When it was proposed to carry on Bills from one Session to another, the right hon. Gentleman was absolutely opposed to the suggestion. In 1881 and 1882 the right hon. Gentleman made alterations in procedure. He was Prime Minister at that time, and there was trouble with the Irish Party, who were very strong. A Coercion Bill was being passed in 1881 and certain Rules of Urgency were adopted. From an authoritative source he had received the information that those Rules were passed on the initiative of the Chair. In 1892 the Closure was passed, and that also rested on the initiative of the Speaker. The procedure of the late Government was on this wise. The late Government passed the Closure in 1887 in much the same form as it had been passed in 1882, but it rested with the Speaker as well as with the Chairman of Committees whether the Motion should be put. It never was intended, he thought, except for the great political purpose of the Party opposite of carrying the Home Rule Bill, that the Closure should be used for the purpose of oppression or tyranny, but simply when the course of business became embarrassing. The late Government also passed in 1888 15 new Rules, the best which had ever been passed for regulating their business. He protested against the theory of the right hon. Baronet with regard to dealing with little Bills. They were often more contentious than big Bills.

*SIR C. W. DILKE desired to state what he really did say. He merely endorsed a suggestion of his right hon. Friend

Lord R. Churchill

with regard to small Bills which had not met with more than a certain measure of opposition.

LORD R. CHURCHILL said, these interruptions showed that he was very unfortunate in his appreciation of what had been said. He protested against placing small Bills on a level with large Bills such as the Eight Hours Bill. He thought there should be a Ballot, and that private Members' time should be extended as much as possible. Their time was always very contracted—it was certainly never too large. He had never known a period when private Members' time was not encroached upon by the existing Government. To put the reform of procedure into the hands of private Members without the concurrence of the Leaders of the Opposition would be the gravest departure from precedent ever adopted by the House of Commons.

*MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) said, he agreed with the noble Lord that the term "private Members" was an absurd phrase. They were all public Members, and he was glad to see that in the latest edition of Sir Erskine May's book the term used was "unofficial Members," which seemed to him to convey a much more accurate description of the position occupied by those who were not Members of the Government. He thought also that a proposal of this character should be brought forward under the aegis of the Government, and no Committee would command any confidence unless a commanding Member of the Government was its Chairman. At the same time, he did not concur with the optimistic view expressed by the noble Lord (Lord R. Churchill) of the present position. He cordially endorsed all that had fallen from the Mover and Seconder of the Motion with respect to opinion outside concerning Parliamentary procedure. He was bound to say there was a large amount of impatient bewilderment out of doors, and it seemed to him that the necessity of some further devolution of business was self-evident. The situation had become almost intolerable from its uncertainty. This matter affected the Government just as much as it affected unofficial Members. During the last eight or 10 years, Queen's Speeches had always contained five or

six times as many measures as could possibly be carried into law. No stronger condemnation of the procedure of the House of Commons could be found than in that single fact. The case with regard to non-contentious measures was even more serious. During last Session of Parliament there were two Committees appointed by the Government dealing with matters in which the House, at least, had very great interest, and which were not Party matters at all. The Committee on Railway Rates sat a great many days, and after the most exhaustive inquiry with practical unanimity adopted a Report drawn by the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre). The President of the Board of Trade had announced that a Bill, founded on the recommendation of that Committee, would be brought before the House; but everybody knew that in the present state of business, and with the present procedure, it was almost hopeless to expect a good Railway Rates Bill. Then the Committee on Building Societies of last Session spent five hours in maturing its Report. He was sure that in the judgment of every Member of the Committee a Bill was needed dealing reasonably, carefully, but still firmly, with Building Societies throughout the country. If a notorious person happened to arrive in this country there might be such a feeling produced by the revelations which would be made at the particular trial as would almost compel the House to pass a measure on the subject. The cases of the Rating and Machinery Bill and the Eight Hours (Mines) Bill had been mentioned. Those two measures had passed a Second Reading by large majorities more than once; but unless something very unexpected happened and the Government gave facilities, neither of them had the slightest chance of passing into law. It almost came to this—that in regard to non-official Members' Bills the House began each Session with an unmitigated farce. Something like 250 Members put their names in the Ballot this Session, but even the first five of those who came out of it had very little chance indeed of seeing their measures become law in the present year. The reasons for the present state of things were not hard to see. There was a constant pressure from outside for new legis-

lation, and constant promises from candidates in response to it. There was undoubtedly arising outside a feeling that an Act of Parliament could do almost everything, and cure all the ills that flesh was heir to. Accompanied by this the House had to contend with the fact that it had very much less time in which to transact its business. The alterations made in procedure in 1888 created an enormous revolution. A certain hour was fixed when business should stop, and this put for the first time in the power of persons who desired to obstruct or delay particular business the opportunity of doing so. It also put it in the power of one man out of 670 to stop all business after a particular time. Such a state of things would not be tolerated for a single moment in a Town Council or a County Council, or in any other body. Mr. Speaker had, much to the gratification and admiration of Members, mitigated the operation of the Rule in some respects, but he thought that before long the House ought to take the matter into its own hands. The real remedy for the present state of things was, after all, to bring the Standing Orders into harmony with the requirements of the moment. What he thought was most required was certainty in the way in which business was conducted. The Committee of 1861 quoted Mr. Speaker Shaw-Lefevre as saying in 1854—

"In all the improvements that we have yet made in the conduct of Public Business we have endeavoured as much as possible to let the House understand exactly what questions they have to discuss to prevent surprises and to give some certainty to our proceedings."

Mr. Speaker Denison, speaking in 1861, said that the most important thing to which the attention of the House could be directed was certainty in the business of the House from day to day, and that certainty was to be regarded as the primary object. At the present time one did not know in the morning what would be done in the evening, or on one day what would be done the next. Who was responsible? Primarily, of course, the Government of the day was responsible. The appropriation of the time of the House by the Standing Orders was antiquated and obsolete. The Government had only two days out of five in which to conduct their business, and even the most inveterate non-official Member would agree

that this was absolutely too small an amount of time for the Government to have at its disposal. One might see how absurd the Standing Orders were on this subject by looking at the annual Return respecting the manner in which the Government made inroads upon the time of the House. It was not well that the Government should so frequently have to alter the Standing Orders. It had been stated that Standing Committees had never been used for the purpose of considering non-official Members' Bills. This was an error. Twice last Session Bills which had no connection with the Government whatever were submitted to the Committee on Law. The Committee of Lord Hartington in 1886 specially contemplated their being so referred. As to the discussions in Committee of Supply, driven as they were almost universally now until after the last day of July, these were becoming of very little practical use, and he agreed with the suggestion of Lord Hartington's Committee that the actual financial examination of the figures might very well be regulated elsewhere. Some plan was needed whereby the volume of opinion with respect to particular Bills should be able to make itself felt. He thought also the valuable principle of classification of Bills, which was already recognised in the Standing Orders, should be adopted after Easter in place of after Whitsuntide. He was not sure that the question of carrying over did not involve much graver considerations than appeared from what was said either by the Mover or Seconder of the Motion. The Report of the Committee of 1890, and especially the Report brought up by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), raised the very gravest Constitutional questions on the subject. There were a great many recommendations strewn through the Reports of the various Committees to which time did not permit reference; but he was one of those who had always felt that there had been, on the part of the predecessors of the present Members of the House, the very wisest caution in dealing with the Standing Orders. The Report of 1861 said that the maintenance of the old Rules was preferable to new but speculative Amendments. In the present Parliament some experiments had been made that had not been altogether successful, and he did

not desire to rush into any rash experiments. The Seconder of the Motion had alluded to the Closure. He thought its use should be very carefully adjusted to the requirements of the business before the House. During the last Parliament he had seen the Closure used in a way which he thought was detrimental to the efficiency of the House and to the dignity of its Leaders. He had always held the opinion expressed by Sir Stafford Northcote that they should limit opportunities of debate rather than restrict freedom of discussion, and he agreed entirely with what had been said by the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour), that the House of Commons must not be judged, like a mine, by the output. Whether the time had come for the appointment of a Select Committee was for the House to decide; but he thought that the Mover and Seconder of the Motion might be well satisfied with the manner in which the proposal had been received by the House. He was sure the discussion would be useful, and that sooner or later the House of Commons would have to reform its procedure, and do its business in a businesslike way.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) said, he thought the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Islington (Sir A. Rolit) was a most interesting and strong speech as far as it consisted of a denunciation of the present system, but that there was a great falling-off in it when it came to the suggestion of remedies. That, he thought, had been the defect of the whole of the present Debate. His hon. Friend had made one suggestion which immediately had cold water thrown upon it by the right hon. Baronet (Sir C. W. Dilke), and that was about "syndicating Bills" or "underwriting."

*SIR C. W. DILKE said, the hon. Member was mistaken. He had said, in passing, that possibly underwriting might not be the best form of carrying out the intention, but, with regard to general principles, he had entirely endorsed the view expressed by his right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney.)

Mr. HANBURY said, that hitherto, at all events, the House had set its face against that method. It had been one of the great complaints of private Members that all the Wednesdays had been taken up by the Irish Members. The right hon. Baronet

admitted that in the House itself the feeling against the present system was not very strong, but said that a strong feeling existed outside. Of course, people outside could not know what the difficulties were; they could not know how difficult it was to frame Rules which would enable the hundreds of thousands of subjects that had to be discussed by Parliament to be brought before the House. He (Mr. Hanbury) agreed that a good deal of the private legislation of the House might be done locally. Even if it were not devolved upon Local Bodies it would no doubt be more economically done if done on the spot. No doubt a great many reckless promises were made by Members as to the legislation that was going to be passed, and constituents were naturally disappointed when those promises were not fulfilled. Reference had been made to a variety of the most useful Party measures, such as the measure arising out of the Report of the Railway Rates Committee. There was no doubt, however, that all Governments unfortunately gave too great a precedence to mere political measures over the measures which were supported by Members on both sides. His hon. Friend (Sir A. Rollit) had said there were some Members on that (the Opposition) side of the House who objected to legislation altogether. He (Mr. Hanbury) did not think there were any who went so far as that. There was, however, a strong opinion amongst many that it was better that a few measures should be passed after having been properly considered than that a whole host of measures should pass without much discussion, especially when they were passed after 12 o'clock at night. So far as he understood the suggestions of his hon. Friend, the result of all of them would be that they would sit later at night; that they would begin the Sitting earlier in the morning, and that they would sit during a longer period of the year. A great distinction ought to be drawn between Government Bills and private Members' Bills after 12 o'clock at night. He had always objected to Government Bills coming on after 12 o'clock, because the Government were the masters of their own time, but he was opposed to the blocking of private Members' Bills of a good and useful character. But they must recollect that

if the suggestions of his hon. Friend were carried out they would every night have private Members' Bills discussed after 12 o'clock until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and thus, if at the same time they extended the Committee system, they would be lengthening the time of the House at both ends. The House was becoming more and more a House of business men, and it was utterly impossible for those men to sit there regularly on Committees at 12 o'clock in the morning. They had already gone too far in the matter of Committees. Queen's counsel and barristers and other Members were excused from attendance, and the result was that pretty much the same Members were found sitting on every one of the Committees. Therefore, if the suggestions of the hon. Member were carried out they would have fewer and fewer of the most useful Members coming to the House, and the work of the House would be thrown into the hands of a set of professional politicians. He entirely agreed that it would be well if there were more certainty as to Government Business, because at present they never knew what was coming on. Therefore, while he sympathised with the object of his hon. Friend, he could not see that any reasonable suggestion had been made as yet to meet the difficulty, and he was bound to say that he feared his hon. Friend's suggestions would rather increase than decrease the evil.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he was afraid that the present state of the House justified the observations which had been made by his right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean, that this was a subject in which Members themselves did not feel very strongly interested. There was no doubt, on the part of the older Members of the House, a constant tendency to make idols of the Forms of business, and he was afraid they thought that there existed the best possible arrangements for the despatch of business. He was, however, quite satisfied that his right hon. Friend was right when he said that in the country there was a strong feeling that somehow or other they did not do as much business as their constituents had a right to expect. Work was not done. They talked about things, but somehow or other consumed their time without performing, not all that

was required, but even a very moderate portion of what was expected of them. On the balance of argument, he thought the Leader of the House would see that there was a very strong case for a Grand Committee. There were only three ways of improving their position. They must enlarge their time, or diminish their work, or economise their time. As to enlarging their time, no doubt, as had been shown, their recent experience had been that it was curtailed. The recent experiment made of closing contentious business at 12 o'clock had very materially shortened the time at their disposal, and lessened to a very great degree the amount of work formerly done after that hour; but by reducing their work and economising their time they might still recover a great deal of lost ground. If the House were relieved of Private Business they would be able to devote much more time to Public Business without increasing the demand made on the time of hon. Members. If they also referred the Committee stage of Bills and certain branches of the Estimates to Committees outside the House, and got a considerable portion of work discharged concurrently by three or four Grand Committees, they would be able to get through much more Government Business. A good deal of time was now lost on Friday nights, and to save it he suggested that they should permanently adopt the practice of holding on that day a Morning Sitting from 2 to 7 o'clock for Government Business, and an Evening Sitting from 9 to 12 o'clock for private Members' Motions. That would be no waste of time, because a great many hon. Members who were not interested in the subjects to be brought on might go way into the country on the Friday night, after the Government Business was brought to a close for the day. With regard to private Members' time, there was a much greater power of economising that time which was at their disposal. A "system of voice" might be arranged by which the majority and the minority of private Members might each in turn proportionately get an opportunity of bringing forward their measures. They could, by an easy arrangement, secure that the time at the disposal of private Members might be so arranged that it could be devoted to subjects which they had at

heart. This would facilitate legislation by private Members, especially if their measures, after reaching a certain stage, were allowed to be taken up again at that stage the following Session. No doubt under such a system the majority of the private Members would obtain the pull in the first instance, but the minority would also obtain their fair share of the time of the House. Reference had been made to some Members who appeared to think that all legislation on the part of private Members might be dropped, but he did not think that anybody of experience would approve of that. Bills introduced by private Members had been largely instrumental in influencing the legislation of this House. In some cases private Members had succeeded in passing their Bills: in other cases they had brought them on year after year until the Government had been bound to take them up and carry them through. He would refer to one of the most recent cases—the Cruelty to Children Act, which had been carried by the exertions of a private Member. The experience of the working of that Act must convince everybody who had any doubt about it before of the extreme necessity there was for passing such a measure. It had brought to light the most horrible cases of cruelty to children on the part of parents and others, and much evil had been redressed. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of London and other private Members had been able to pass Bills which were of great interest to the community at large. It had been owing to the action of private Members on Wednesday afternoon that church rates had been abolished, the Burials Act carried, and many vexed questions of a similar character settled. The Deceased Wife's Sister question also, although not yet settled, had been dealt with on a Wednesday. By the proposal he had made many measures that were much desired by different sections of the House might be carried through. It had been suggested that an hour might be set apart once a week or once a fortnight for carrying measures to which there was little or no opposition. He entirely approved of that proposal. Of course, in such a case, if a sufficient number of hon. Members were to signify their opposition to any measure of the kind in

writing it would come on in the ordinary way. These were all measures which might well be taken into consideration by a Committee without the Government being called upon to express any opinion with regard to them at the present moment. They said that there was a case for submission to a Committee, as public time was not now used as efficiently as it might be. Both in respect of Public and Private Business there was a case for examination, and for practical suggestions to be inquired into, and he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer, despite the comparatively small attendance at this Debate, would see his way to granting the Committee asked for.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (LYNN Regis) said, that when he first read the terms of the Motion he felt very much inclined to support it by his vote, but every speech he had heard had made him less inclined to do so, and the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin had finally decided him to vote against the Motion. The speech of the Member for the Forest of Dean did not greatly affect his opinion of the Motion one way or the other, because the right hon. Gentleman had confined himself to generalities. The hon. Member for South Islington, who moved the Motion, was, he was bound to say, the Member who began the impression on his mind which induced him to vote against the Motion; but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin had clearly shown, in that magisterial manner with which he was wont to address the House, that the Motion should not further be proceeded with. The right hon. Gentleman, who was a man of great authority, had shown that two things only could be done to improve the forms of procedure of the House—namely, that Private Business, or business connected with Private Bills, should be delegated to some other authority; and that the Estimates, instead of being thrown, as it were, on the floor of the House in their thousands and left to the industry, or want of industry, of Members to go through them in order to acquire the knowledge necessary for discussing them even in a most cursory fashion, should be referred for examination to a Committee upstairs. There was something to be said for both these points. Private legislation undoubtedly

partook of a judicial character, and it would be an advantage to remove all judicial business from the Chamber, which was nothing if not legislative. Again, the reference of the Estimates to a Committee would be an advantage if the Committee were empowered to have before it the permanent officials responsible for the Estimates. The difficulty in dealing with the Estimates was that the Treasury Bench was occupied by a number of gentlemen who really knew little or nothing about them, and who, when they were asked a question about them, could not answer until they had consulted their prompters who sat under the Gallery, or else could only say that the matter was under consideration, or give some other sort of unsatisfactory reply. It would, therefore, be of considerable advantage to have the Estimates examined by a Committee, who would have the officials who prepared the Estimates before them, instead of Ministers who knew nothing, and could know nothing, about the details. But, at the same time, he should be sorry to see the Estimates taken outside the purview of the House altogether, and he did claim that the right of examination of the Estimates, and of cross-examination of the Ministers upon them, was a right most essential to the performance of the most important duties of the Committees of the House. The hon. Member for Islington talked of discussion on the Estimates as a waste of time. He knew not from what fount the hon. Gentleman got his Constitutional knowledge; but he had always understood that one of the most important functions of the House was the guardianship of the Public Purse, and he did not see how the Public Purse was to be guarded unless the Estimates were duly discussed. The hon. Member for Islington had also used words that shocked him with regard to the Rules and Forms of the House. The hon. Gentleman said they were cumbersome, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean added that the outside world was convinced they were cumbersome. He challenged that assertion. He believed that no such feeling existed outside the House. There was a strong feeling outside the House that people did not understand the Rules and Forms of the House, and that was only natural; but he had never found any widespread public feeling that the Rules of the

House were too cumbersome. He used the word "too" advisedly. Having regard to the great complexity of the business which came before the House, it was inevitable that the Rules should appear cumbersome to those not acquainted with them, but he denied that they were cumbersome as a matter of fact. Instead of being cumbersome, he considered that the Rules of the House were admirably good Rules. Undoubtedly, he had come across Rules which seemed to him at first to be without good reason, but he soon came to understand that there was excellent and sufficient reason for the Rules, and that without them the business of the House could not be well conducted. He would cite as an example of what seemed a trifling Rule the Rule which said that no Member might stand above the Bar. If that Rule had been strictly observed the scene which took place in the House last Session, and which they all regretted, would not have occurred. He should strongly condemn the hon. Member for Islington for presuming to tell the House that its Rules were cumbersome; and he had been pained to find that even the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin was inclined to adopt the same tone, and cast ridicule and contempt on some of the Rules of the House, which were entitled to great respect. The Australian Parliament was, like all Parliaments worthy of the name, based upon our Parliament, and an Australian Minister recently writing on the subject had said that they had thought they could improve on some of the Rules that had been adopted from the House of Commons; but when they had changed the Rules, they found that things did not go so well; they saw that there was good reason and sound principle at the bottom of the Rules they had abandoned, and so they quickly re-adopted the Rules again. That was a very strong testimony of the value of the Rules of the House. He believed that the Rules were admirable. They had grown up from the experience of a thousand years, and if and when they were bad it was because they had been subjected to hasty, unreflecting, and inconsiderate Amendments, contrived to meet the supposed exigencies of the moment or the imagined convenience of a Party. The Rules were good, and all that was required was that they should be understood and properly

carried out. The Debate had turned on the point of the allocation of the time of the House. He ventured to say that it was impossible to read attentively through and understand the Rules of the House without seeing that the ordinary allocation of time was most excellent as between Ministers and non-official or unpaid Members. The allocation of the time of the House as between the unpaid Members and the placemen was good. But what happened? The Session was hardly begun when the Government appropriated nearly all the time for their own measures, and there was very little opportunity left for any other business. The offenders against the Rules of the House, the purloiners of its time, were not the private Members, but the Government; and so long as private Members neglected to combine together, irrespective of Party, to maintain their rights and to refuse the Government permission to take all the time of the House in this unconstitutional fashion, so long would the House suffer from what was the great complaint of the present time. The hon. Member for Islington had also declared that the results obtained under the Rules had not pleased him. There were not enough Acts of Parliament passed. The hon. Member complained that only 27 out of 357 Bills introduced last Session had passed. His own opinion was that 27 were rather more than ought to have been passed. The remaining 330 were extremely bad, haphazard, ill-considered Bills, which ought never to have been introduced at all. The Member for Islington wanted more Acts of Parliament and less consideration. He, on the other hand, wanted more consideration and fewer Acts of Parliament. The Member for Islington had his pockets full of Bills, some Conservative and some Radical, but other Members took a more prosaic view of their duty. They were there to see that the business of the country was well conducted, and to prevent the hon. Gentlemen opposite from spending too much money. He also considered that the Twelve o'Clock Rule was a good Rule and required no alteration. It was not reasonable to ask the House to accept Bills after 12 o'clock, unless they were of a non-contentious character, and it was perfectly right that Members with sufficient public spirit should object to Bills being considered at such an hour, when there was no time for

full and free discussion. It was suggested that they should have a system of underwriting Bills; but if Bills were to be underwritten, they must also have underwriting against Bills. That was only a natural corollary; and consequently they would have Members in charge of Bills occupying the whole of their time getting Members to back their Bills, while their opponents would be running about on the other side getting other Members to underwrite against the Bills. Then he presumed that there must be a quorum of underwriters. What would be the quorum, 50, or 90, or 120? He thought that half the House would not be too large a quorum. Therefore, it would be necessary to get 335 Members to back a Bill before it could be taken out of its turn and considered. He thought such a suggestion might be dismissed without further attention. Technicalities and Forms had been treated with great contempt by various Members who had spoken in the Debate. He defended the technicalities and Forms of the House as being a protection of the weak against the strong. He would remind the House that the Form of requiring a Member introducing a Bill to appear at the Bar of the House was taken from the ancient practice of Bills being brought into the House from outside, and when agreed to by the Parliament, becoming Acts. The time taken in this operation was extremely small, and it seemed to him that it was a Form to which meaning and traditions attached which ought not to be cast aside, but should be preserved. He was not prepared to deny that there were directions in which the Rules of the House might possibly be amended; but if there were, it was rather in reversion to old principles and forms and the language of old Rules than by—if he might use the term—getting into back parlours and inventing new Rules to fit particular occasions. There was a time when placemen were not allowed to sit in the House. There was a time when, according to Prynne, 40 was not considered a quorum except for Prayers and unimportant business; and when for the consideration of grave and serious Public Business it was held necessary that the whole or greater part of the House should be present. That Rule had been not invented, but borrowed from this House by the United States; so that while this House had gone back through the usurpation of the

Long Parliament to a quorum of 40, the United States House of Representatives required that, before serious business could be considered, there should be half the House, plus one, present. That might be a reform worthy of consideration. Again, there was the “call of the House,” such as was made in 1628, moved by Sir G. Moore—

“That any Members of the House being in town and not attending here the Serjeant to be sent for them. The Serjeant to be sent for all the Members of the House now in town as well lawyers as others”

There was no privilege for lawyers then. No; the country wanted them—

“to be here presently and to attend every day.”

Again, next year, this was placed on the Journals of the House—

“Ordered, No Member of this House shall go out of town till this great business is ended without special leave of the House.”

In 1628 it was ordered—

“The House shall be called upon Thursday next week, and every Member of the House then to attend upon pain of £10, to be disposed of as the House shall appoint, besides such further forfeiture as the House shall inflict.”

That “call” enforced in that manner was one which might conceivably be reverted to by Members jealous of the honour and dignity of the House. Again, he was informed, there was a practice which consisted in an arrangement between two Members that one should vote one way and the other the other without hearing the question. That was a practice he did not indulge in. He was told, however, that it existed to a large extent, lasting sometimes over several months. That seemed to him to be a practice that might be mended by the Rules of the House. He had ventured to make a few criticisms on the Motion. He had set forward the grounds on which he found it impossible to vote for it, and he submitted, in conclusion, that the Rules of the House as they existed were extremely good, if only the Government would not use its majority to prevent their observance; and, if they required alteration in any way at all, this should rather be in the direction of reverting to some of the ancient Forms and Regulations than by the adoption of crude, unreflected, and unconsidered Motions such as that presented to the House upon the present occasion.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 41; Noes 136.—(Division List, No. 11.)

HOME RULE (SCOTLAND).

RESOLUTION.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I rise to move—

“That it is desirable, while retaining intact the power and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, to establish a Legislature in Scotland for dealing with purely Scottish affairs.”

I am not unconscious of the fact that, having regard to the proposal submitted yesterday by the Government, closely affecting the position and character of Scotch business, there may be a disposition in some quarters to regard my proposal as somewhat unnecessary and inopportune. That is not my view. On the contrary, I doubt whether, if I had been privileged to select my own time, I could have chosen a moment more calculated to bring home to the mind of the House and the country the force of my Resolution, and the expediency of adopting the principle which it involves. What are the circumstances? Yesterday and to-day two proposals have been made for Committees—one by the Government, and the other by an influential Member of the Tory Party. The proposals differ in character and in detail; but they are alike in this—that they proceed upon the assumption that the state of business in the House has arrived at the point when, if the Parliamentary machine is to discharge all the functions that are properly expected of it, some new and bold departure will have to be undertaken. We are agreed that the disease from which the patient is suffering is congestion. We only differ as to the remedy that is to be applied. If there was any doubt about the nature of the disease, I would mention one fact, and call one witness. Having taken pains to ascertain the number of Bills introduced last Session, I find that there are no fewer than 386, and that, putting aside purely Departmental Bills, only 58 come under the consideration of the House. I do not claim that that is an absolutely reliable test, but it is fair to assume that every one of the 386 Bills embodied a proposal desired by a certain section of the community, and the fact that only 58 of them were even discussed is an indication that further time is necessary for the Debates in this House. The witness

I will call will not be thought to be violently enthusiastic on behalf of reform. It is *The Scotsman* newspaper. Some three years ago a pamphlet was published from *The Scotsman* office putting before Scotland and the country a proposal for what was termed a local National Assembly, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the most remarkable contributions that have been made to the Home Rule controversy. What did the writer say? He said—

“The Imperial Parliament cannot adequately cope with the legislative requirements of the different parts of the United Kingdom. The Imperial Parliament has admitted its own incapacity to deal with all the subjects it once used to take in hand. It has parted with some of its work from time to time, delegating it to other hands. Still the pressure increases, and it is simple fatuity to suppose the question of further and wider delegation can be long delayed.”

That is a Unionist opinion, certainly not tainted with any Radical fallacy. As a Scotch Member, I am grateful to the Government for having, even at this late hour, arrived at the decision that something must be done in order to carry through Scotch legislation. But it is four or five years since my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries Burghs (Mr. R. T. Reid) put forward the proposal for a Grand Committee. It was again brought forward on the day on which the present Parliament assembled by the Member for North Aberdeen. Being then supported with a requisition by an overwhelming majority of the Scotch Liberal Members, the Government were asked to give one or two nights in order to set up a Scotch Grand Committee, and I think there is some reason to wonder that the Government did not see the force of the proposition that was then made. The best that can be said of the Grand Committee is that it is one stage, and one stage only. All that we should be able to save by it would be the Committee stage; and we have to face the possibility of the other stages being in consequence considerably prolonged. I accept the proposal for the Grand Committee in the spirit in which I am sure it is offered by the Government, that is as a temporary makeshift, and not as an integral part of the fabric of the Scottish Government. It is fashionable in some quarters to suggest that there really is no solid demand in Scotland for the principle embodied in my Resolution. The hon. Baronet the

Member for Wigtonshire (Sir H. Maxwell) took upon himself the responsibility of saying that there is no demand on the part of Scotland for Home Rule. I wish to ask, by what means are we to test the feelings of the Scottish people upon public questions? Are we to take the opinion of the hon. Baronet, who is identified with a Party which has only a minority out of the whole representation of Scotland? The legitimate way to find out the opinion of the people of Scotland is to look to their Representatives in the House of Commons, and the Representatives of Scotland, by an overwhelming majority, voted on the last occasion this Motion was before the House for the principle of Home Rule. The demand in Scotland is a growing demand, and is formed upon the solid opinion that in the direction of Home Rule lies the only possible way in which the judgment of the people of Scotland, as expressed at the polls, can be translated into legislative action. The progress of this movement has been remarkable. In 1889, when the Motion for Home Rule was brought forward by the Member for Caithness, it was rejected by 121 votes. In 1890 it was rejected by 40. In 1892 it was rejected by 20; and in 1893 it was rejected by 18. This Resolution is not brought forward in any spirit of enmity or resentment against England, and, if it were, ruin and disaster would be immediately brought upon the cause. The proposal is offered to the House as a practical solution of the difficulty that has arisen through the neglect of Scottish business in the House of Commons. I will quote two authorities, to give an idea of the general feeling that has existed with regard to the treatment of Scotland in the Imperial Parliament. Professor Aytoun, writing in 1853, said—

“The form in which our affairs have been administered for well-nigh 100 years is quite inadequate for the purpose for which it was originally intended, and the rapid development of the wealth and population of the country ought long ago to have suggested the propriety of a more rational arrangement. The case is a very clear one, founded upon justice and public policy; and if properly argued no Government can venture to treat it lightly.”

The late Prime Minister, when receiving the freedom of Aberdeen 23 years ago, said—

“I admit without the least hesitation that the present condition of the action of Parliament

with regard to Scotch business is unsatisfactory. You have much more reason to complain that we have not been able to deal with several subjects interesting to the people of Scotland, and material to its welfare, with the promptitude that we should all have desired.”

But it is on what has happened since 1886 that I desire to base the demand which I put before the House. In that year the Local Government Bill was brought in. It was a Bill which did not raise any great Constitutional question. It was approached in a non-Party spirit by the great majority of the Representatives for Scotland; and yet I find that on every vital feature of the Bill the opinion of the majority of the Scottish people was practically set aside. On the question of the control of the police, 48 Members for Scotland desired that that should be given to the County Councils, and 18 were against it. With respect to giving the County Councils the same licensing power as the burghs, 48 were in favour and 12 against. On the question of the compulsory acquisition of land 46 were in favour of giving power to the County Councils and 12 were against. And there was practically the same unequal division with respect to the question of rights of way. In face of facts such as these it is beside the question to pretend that Scottish opinion is fairly considered or even receives any respect at all in this House. To pass from Government Bills, I come to other questions which have been brought forward, or attempted to be brought forward, in this House. There is the question of access to mountains. That is a question to which a great deal of importance is attached by a large section of the people of Scotland, and yet the Chancellor of the Duchy, year after year, for nine different years, brought the question before the House, and it was only through what, I think, was an inadvertence on the part of the Conservative Government, that another Member was able to secure a majority in favour of that proposal. The year afterwards the Conservative Government brought forward a Bill dealing with the question, but I think I may fairly claim that it was not considered a satisfactory measure by the great body of Scotch Members. I take next the question of the Local Veto Bill—a question of some importance. Apart alto-

gether from the merits or demerits of that question, we must admit that in Scotland the local veto question receives the support of a very large and influential section of the population. For 10 years Mr. McLagan, recently a Member of this House, attempted to get a settlement of that question, but he was never able to do so. There is another question of equal importance—the question of the amendment of the Crofters Act. That Act was passed some six or seven years since, and the most important flaw in it, from the point of view of the crofters' Representatives, is that it does not apply to leaseholders. Every year since that Act was passed an attempt has been made by the Member for Caithness and other crofters' Representatives to obtain an opportunity for amending that Act in the direction of the inclusion of leaseholders. They have never been successful, and there is not the slightest hope that the question will be dealt with during the present Session, or even during the present Parliament. Coming to last Session, there was the Fatal Accidents Bill. That was a Bill, again, of a non-Party character, and it was sent to a Grand Committee, I believe, without a Division. It passed through the Grand Committee, and was brought into the House, and because what I consider a perfectly legitimate Amendment, suggesting that juries should be called in case of injury, was put in the Bill it was withdrawn by the Lord Advocate on the ground that it was impossible to get the two or three hours necessary in order to discuss that Amendment. The result was that that Bill, which was supported by every Representative Working Class Organisation in Scotland, by every Trades Union, and by every Representative Association, was lost. In the face of facts such as these it is idle to pretend that Scottish desires and Scottish opinion can ever be properly considered in this House. It is agreed by Parties on both sides of the House that, so far as the financial relations between the two countries are concerned, Scotland has a very great deal to complain of, and I am glad that the Government has, after several years, seen their way to promise that an inquiry will take place into the matter. I would just remind the House, in considering the general position of Scot-

land, that by general consent it is admitted that Scotland is overtaxed at the present time to the extent of £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 per year. Not only so, but Scotland is not treated in the same liberal way with regard to Imperial grants as the other parts of the Kingdom are, or have been in the past. I would also remind the House that from the point of view of population the average contribution per head in Ireland is £1 11s. 3d.; in England it is £2 2s. 3d., and in Scotland it is £2 5s. 8d., so that in that respect we have something to complain of. Then there is the question of Private Bill legislation. That is a very old complaint of Scotland. It was brought forward in 1876, and it has been renewed in almost every successive year. I will give the House just one or two figures as to the cost of Private Bill legislation. I have had supplied to me by the Treasurer of Glasgow a statement which shows that from 1865 to 1892 no less than £283,028 14s. 6d. were spent in the promotion of and opposition to Private Bills. From Edinburgh I learn that from 1872 to 1893 £75,000 were spent in the same fashion. In Dundee, since 1871, upwards of £60,000 were spent in connection with Private Bill legislation, and I believe the full total for Scotland for the 14 years from 1872 to 1885 is not less than £1,294,812. [*Cheers.*] I understand the cheers from gentlemen opposite. I suppose their reply to me on this point will be that they introduced a Bill when they were in Office, and that if that Bill had been allowed to pass the whole question would have been properly settled. But the Government was in Office for six years, and how was it they could not find time to pass the measure? I am aware that it was opposed by certain Members, but that is no answer to the complaint that if it was a good Bill time ought to have been found to pass it. I think that Bill was an excellent Bill as far as it went, and I would like to see a Bill of the same character introduced again, but I hope it will be a more thorough-going and complete measure, and will deal with Unopposed as well as Opposed Private Bills. What is the Tory position on this question? Are they going to oppose all idea of decentralisation? I do not think I am justified in assuming anything of the

kind. The Leader of the Opposition put forward last night one of the most revolutionary proposals which I ever heard. The Government brought forward a proposal that Scotch Members should practically be supreme so far as Scotch Bills were concerned, and what was the attitude of gentlemen opposite? They complained that the proposal did not go far enough. They said they wanted it for England, for Ireland, and for Wales. I think if they go that length they will very soon be prepared to go a little further, and to recognise that if it was good for Scotch, for English, and for Welsh Members to be supreme on their local questions in this House it is, perhaps, a little better that they should discuss the questions in the localities more particularly concerned. It is no longer a question of whether Home Rule is to be granted, but it is a question how that decentralisation can be applied. Therefore, the conclusion which I arrive at is, in the first place, that Parliament is overburdened, and that relief is necessary; secondly, that Scottish interests have been neglected in the past, and that there is no prospect that they will be better attended to in the future; thirdly, that the principles of representative government demand that Scotch opinion should be supreme in Scottish affairs, and this is only possible by the establishment of a Scottish Legislature; fourthly, that Scotland presents an ideal field for a great experiment in local self-government. [*Laughter and cheers.*] I can hardly suppose that those Members opposite who are Scotchmen will take up the view that Scotland does not possess an ideal field for local self-government. I am in favour of Home Rule all round. I believe that is the only possible way in which we can properly carry forward the legislation of the country. My idea is that this House will have to undergo a very great and material change so far as the business laid before it is concerned. We are too much occupied in discussing purely local questions which can be better settled in the localities concerned. Let this House devote itself—first, to the consideration of all the great questions which have the same application to all portions of the Kingdom; and, in the second place, to the consideration of the great Colonial, Indian, and Imperial

questions which ought to engage more than they do at present the close attention of the House. It is because I believe my Resolution is a step in that direction that I submit it to the House.

MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.) said, he desired to second the Motion. He did not suppose there would be many persons within the House found to disagree upon its merits, or with the proposition that if they were given a geographical area—he used the words “geographical area” because he preferred to avoid the word “nation,” which always excited the worst possible passion in this House—with a separate Judicature of its own, with separate laws of its own, the best, and he should suppose the most obvious, mode of legislating for such an area would be a Representative Assembly within the jurisdiction itself. It was a great disadvantage for any country to be separated by a distance from the seat of Government, and he believed the newly-awakened interest in regard to London legislation was due to the Metropolis possessing an admirable Local Body to look after its affairs, and to the fact that they were surrounded by a horde of London Members within easy cab fare of their constituencies, and who were able to bring to bear upon this House a constant pressure which those constituencies at a distance were unable to do. He had no doubt that a Legislative Assembly of Scotsmen sitting in Edinburgh would develop a most useful representative activity in many fields which were at present unexplored. There were numberless law reforms and land reforms which, he was sure, if there was a Legislature in Edinburgh, would engage the attention of Scottish lawyers which did not engage them at present, when Scottish legislative reform was a hopeless dream. There was public health, which engaged much public attention in a country largely inhabited by doctors. They complained of the very inferior and obsolete weapon which the old Public Health Act had put into their hands to wage warfare against insanitary conditions, which were not altogether undeserving of attention. There were questions of right-of-way, liquor traffic, and educational questions, and the last, if Scotland was to maintain her pre-eminence, would certainly require great consideration. He believed a Scottish Legislative

Assembly would deal with these questions in a grave and useful spirit. Then there was the crucial question of the Scottish Church. He believed that there were some Imperialists of such a complexion that they really believed that the Scottish people should not deal with their own Church without first taking the opinion of the Calvinists of Wales and other parts of the Kingdom. His view was that the question was purely one for the Scottish people. It was idle to talk of a referendum, or to suppose that the United Kingdom would ever consent to a General Election which would turn simply on the question whether one section of the Presbyterian Body should have an Establishment or not. They might wish to confine people's thoughts to the restricted area, but in practice they would find it perfectly impossible. He did not believe that even in a Scottish Legislative Assembly they would be able to do it, but a General Election there which did turn on that question would practically amount to a referendum on that question, because the Scottish people would recognise the importance of the question, and give it precedence over all others. Although a Disestablisher to the backbone, and baptised into the spirit of the Disruption, he still believed it was a monstrous thing that the Scottish Church should be disestablished by the votes of English Nonconformists, who might be giving their vote simply with an eye to the disestablishment of the English Church at home. Here was an opportunity for Tory Members who had been so active on platforms during the last few weeks in making the assertion that Disestablishment was a question for the Scottish people. They had now an opportunity to assent to a proposal which would remit that question to a Scottish Assembly. The objections to Scottish Home Rule were not serious in character. There were no Fenians in Scotland and no Orangemen. Though some miserable and cowardly attempts had lately been made to fan the dying embers of religious bigotry in Scotland into a flame, they had miserably failed, as they deserved. The objections were not serious. They were mainly of a personal character. Scottish Members opposite had a great objection to what they regarded as a one-

horse Legislature sitting in Scotland. The Member for Buteshire (Mr. Graham Murray) on the last occasion when this subject was before the House wound up an eloquent speech by declaring his unwillingness to barter the heritage of an Imperial Parliament for any miserable Parliament that might be offered in its stead, and he would never forget the expression on the face of that distinguished man, now the Lord President, when as Lord Advocate he contemplated the bare possibility of the existence of a Scotch Legislature. The hon. Member had said it would be a bleak and barren prospect. But, after all, a Representative Assembly existed not simply as a playground, and for the amusement and edification of its Members, however distinguished, but for the purpose of attending to the legislative needs of the country in whose service it was summoned. If by any chance even a dull Scotch Assembly transacted Scotch business better than that House—and he admitted that many of the local Scotch Assemblies were dull indeed, though he could not speak with the authority of the late Lord Advocate—then he could quite imagine that Scotland would prefer a Parliament of its own in Edinburgh, although its proceedings would be enlivened by those flashes of wit and philosophic discourses which made a seat in the Imperial Chamber at once a liberal education and a round of cheap amusement. Scotch electors had given their Representatives no mandate to be witty—if they had it might be discharged, at all events, to their own satisfaction—but they sent them to Westminster, in the first place, to look after the affairs of the Empire; and, in the second place, to pass laws for Scotland. As a matter of fact, they had very little time for either of those duties. The interests of the Empire were almost entirely overlooked, and the affairs of Scotland were neglected, while Members were kept there month after month engaged in pursuits in which their constituents certainly took no interest whatever. He would point out that there was no need for those gentlemen who had such an unconquerable objection to appear in a Local Assembly at Edinburgh to sit there at all. The difficulty arose, he supposed, from a feeling that the grant of Scotch Home Rule would necessitate the same grant for

England, and that the latter would seriously interfere with the present system of Cabinet Government. But that would not necessarily follow at all, even assuming there were an English Administration apart from the Imperial Government. He did not think that Scotch Members were in the least degree anxious to interfere in matters purely English, and, having regard to the condition of Scotch business and also to the common-sense reasons of the case, he thought that the time had come when devolution should be allowed to take its natural course. All purely Scotch legislative business in which Englishmen really did not take any interest should be left in the hands of Scotchmen, who, he submitted, had a right to demand that they should be allowed to pass those laws which only operated within the jurisdiction of Scotland. Those were some of the reasons why he had great pleasure in seconding the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it is desirable, while retaining intact the power and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, to establish a Legislature in Scotland for dealing with purely Scottish affairs."
—(Mr. Dalziel.)

*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) said, he must congratulate the hon. Member on his witty speech, but, at the same time, he could not help thinking that it had been intended to be delivered last night. He could not agree with the remarks of the hon. Gentleman that Scotland was an "ideal" field for an experimental Home Rule Bill, and he would be exceedingly sorry to think that Scotchmen should have Home Rule or any other measure forced upon them against their will. He was a Scotchman himself, and it was only natural, therefore, that he should object entirely to apply the old maxim *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* when such a question as that was raised, and he regretted to hear that the hon. Member considered Scotland to be an "ideally vile body" for such an experiment. The speech of the hon. Member for West Fife was clearly intended to be delivered last night, for he actually told the House at the commencement of it that he "rose to support the appointment of *this Committee*." The hon. Member had said

that there were no Orangemen in Scotland. That was not the case, for if he would investigate the matter he would find that there were many of them, and that, too, in Lanarkshire, the greatest county of Scotland. Having spoken at considerable length last evening on a cognate subject, he would not detain the House by offering any extended observations then. The Highlanders from Blackheath and the patriots of Putney had been putting on their kilts, and it was only right that those who were not real Scotchmen should take a leading part in that pseudo-patriotic Debate. He would like all those gentlemen to be allowed to have their Highland fling to their hearts' content. He was sure that the real Scottish Members were all anxious to hear the Englishman who happened to be Home Secretary as well as a Fife Member explain his pseudo-patriotic views, and to hear the English Solicitor General explain why he went to Forfarshire at the behest of the English wirepullers in order to secure what was supposed to be a safe seat to advance his professional career. Above all, they were anxious to hear their English Secretary for Scotland, who last year supported Home Rule for Scotland, and who was subsequently "hauled over the coals," ridiculed, and scorned in the other House by the Scottish nobleman who was now Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. There was, indeed, one movement in which, like his hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy, he, too, took the deepest interest—the movement in favour of an improvement in the Private Bill legislation for Scotland. He was certain that the Scottish Members on the Opposition Benches were unanimous on this point. A Bill had been brought forward by the late Government, but it was obstructed and destroyed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs, who was now Secretary for War. Personally, he (Mr. Hozier) could only say he would do all he could to promote such a measure. He denied that Scottish constituencies had declared in favour of Home Rule for Scotland, and the fact that the present Gladstonian Members supported it did not show that that was the case. In the vast majority of instances Home Rule for Scotland had never been before the constituencies at all. Practically, all

Unionists were opposed to a separate Parliament for Scotland; the Unionist vote was solid against Home Rule for Scotland, and no one pretended that even the Gladstonians were unanimously in favour of it. In most of the Gladstonian constituencies Scottish Home Rulers were a very small minority, even among Gladstonians, but that small minority was like the mosquito—it made a very great deal of noise for its size, and it was able to make its presence felt. This small minority, for example, could make its presence felt in the selection of a Gladstonian candidate; and, again, even after a candidate had been selected, he might still be “heckled” into shape by the Home Rule minority. He wished to put a question to the hon. Member for Caithness, who was the President of the Scottish Home Rule Association, and to the Secretary for Scotland. If a separate Parliament were granted to Scotland tomorrow, would the question of the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland be handed over to it? Perhaps the Secretary for Scotland would kindly either nod or shake his head in answer to that question. He was going to Scotland soon, and he would like to be able to take back an answer. As the right hon. Gentleman made no response, perhaps the hon. Member for Caithness would answer. There was no answer given to that question. An election was going to take place in a few days in a constituency neighbouring his own, and he had every right to know the opinion of the Government. He should also like to know whether the Secretary for Scotland “homologated,” to use the Scotch term, and concurred in the statement made last week by Mr. Caldwell, the Gladstonian candidate for Mid Lanark, when the President of the Scottish Home Rule Association, the hon. Member for Caithness, was on the platform? Mr. Caldwell said—

“Disestablishment is a matter of principle with the Liberal Party, and the Liberal Party having denied, or intending to deny, the right to Ireland, has no right whatever to leave the matter” (of the Established Church) “to be determined by a vote of Scotland, even although there should be a majority of the people of Scotland in favour of the Established Church.”

That was a curious statement to be made by a Scotch Home Ruler. If these words meant anything they meant that, even if a separate Parliament were given

to Scotland, it would not be competent to deal with the Church question; and that, even if a General Election were to be held on the question of Disestablishment in Scotland, and a majority in favour of maintaining the “auld Kirk” were returned, the Government would still be bound, as a matter of principle, to disestablish and disendow the Church of Scotland in spite of the strongest protests of the people of Scotland.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint, &c.) entirely agreed with the hon. Member’s statement that the cause of Home Rule for Scotland was rapidly gaining ground, and had been doing so year by year. It was quite evident that the Scotch people had made up their minds on the question, and when Scotland made up her mind on any particular subject she generally succeeded in attaining it. The certainty of her doing so in this instance was in the not very distant future. He wished to explain his attitude on this Motion as a Welsh Member. Home Rule for Scotland was, as he had said, a certainty at no distant date; and he would impress on the House that Home Rule for Wales must not be left out of the question. Not much had been said of the neglect of Welsh business, though Wales had waited Session after Session for her legislation, until weariness had almost ripened into disgust with the lumbering and clogged machine called Imperial Parliament. Last year a Local Veto Bill for Wales passed its Second Reading, and only one Welsh Member opposed it, while 26 supported it. Yet there was not the least hope of that Bill passing into law. A large number of Bills in which Wales was interested were pending, but, with one single exception, there was no chance of their being passed this Session. The same might be said with regard to this Session, because they knew they would have no opportunity of passing that Bill into law. There were two principal objections to Home Rule for Wales. The first one denied the nationhood of the country, and the other was founded upon the small population of Wales. With regard to the first objection, he should imagine that there was hardly anyone in the House who would

venture seriously to assert that the Welsh were not a nation. The people of Wales were becoming more and more a National Body; separate acts of legislation were being continually passed for the Principality. He did not know whether Scotch or Irish Members were accustomed to hear the vernacular spoken in their countries, but he might say that there were a considerable number of Welsh Members sitting in that House who used it in Wales as the usual mode of communication. He would now come to the objection that Wales was too small for Home Rule.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman must remember that this Motion applies to Scotland only. He is entitled to use the case of Wales as an illustration, but he is not entitled to go into the whole question of Home Rule for Wales.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS said, he would only mention the case of Wales in reference to its bearing upon Home Rule for Scotland. With regard to the objection that Wales was too small for Home Rule, he had only to remind the House of what was the case with regard to other Legislatures all over the world. Canada had nine Parliaments, and Australasia, with a population of 4,000,000, had also a large number of Parliaments, while Germany, with a population of 26,000,000, had 22 separate Parliaments. He entirely agreed that the arguments against Home Rule for Ireland did not apply to Scotland. The case of Wales was similar to that of Scotland in several respects, and the arguments against Home Rule for Ireland did not apply to Wales. Both Scotland and Wales were, at all events, willing to be made the subjects of a Home Rule experiment. He could not go into the case of Wales because of the Speaker's ruling, and he simply wished to say that, knowing something of Wales, and that the circumstances of that country were in many respects identical with those of Scotland, he hoped as an adoption of the principle of Home Rule this Motion would be carried by the House.

*SIR C. PEARSON (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he would not follow the hon. Member at any great length into the analogy, which

no Scottish Member would for a moment grudge, between the cases of Wales and of Scotland in this matter, although he did not agree with him that there were so many points of similarity between the two countries as the hon. Member seemed to imagine. Nor did he think that there was really the rivalry between the two countries to present the body politic for any anatomical experiment which the Government might wish to make in the direction of the Resolution. Nor would he examine the theory which he presented upon the reproductive powers of Parliaments. He desired to look at the subject mainly from a Scottish point of view. This subject evidently demanded very careful treatment, and no subject could have been treated more dissimilarly than it was by the Mover and Seconder. They had the "severe" and the "lively," and he was glad that the Member for West Fife, in the course of a most entertaining speech, at last recognised that this was a subject which had its difficulties. What were the grounds on which this Motion was made at the present time? They might have expected to hear some new aspect of the case—some development of the circumstances, some stronger arguments than had previously been put forward. But they only had the old arguments. They had the old assertion about the neglect of Scottish business in the House, and that they would get rid of that neglect only by applying this ridiculous specific of Home Rule as the remedy. He was disposed to dispute both these propositions. He would remind the House that this proposal was to have a Legislature in Scotland for purely Scottish affairs, while retaining intact the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Upon the latter part they had heard nothing. Yet it was the more important, and they all knew how it was felt to be most difficult—practically impossible—to reconcile the existence of a separate Legislature and Executive with the supremacy of an Imperial Parliament in the Debates on a measure relating to another part of the Kingdom in the present Parliament. And yet this abstract Resolution was moved without any allusion whatever to this most difficult subject. They would notice further that as usual England was not in it. They were getting accustomed to the idea of Federation with the

omission of the predominant partner. But it was felt throughout the country that any such scheme should be disclosed on the responsibility of a Government and submitted as a whole for the discussion of, and consideration by, the House. He was not surprised to find that the Mover experienced a difficulty in discussing the Resolution apart from the discussion of the previous night. But he was yet to learn that certain statements then made committed gentlemen on the Conservative side of the House to certain views as to the propriety of Federation. That was a suggestion which was utterly baseless. He asserted, in the first place, that there was no demand whatever in Scotland which ought for a moment to move the House in the direction of this Resolution. He went further, and said that the cause which had been championed by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy was, so far as indications enabled them to judge, a back-going cause in Scotland. He observed the hon. Gentleman omitted the year 1891 in his Parliamentary history of this matter. That happened to be the only year in which a Bill was tabled embodying anything approaching to the details pointed at in this Resolution; and what happened to it? The discussion upon it was set down for a particular evening, and the keenness of the interest which hon. Members for Scotland felt in the subject, and the urgency of the demand in Scotland, were set forth by the simple fact that the House was counted out.

MR. DALZIEL: I did not include that, because it is well-known that the Bill came on quite unexpectedly, almost at the end of the Sitting. The Scottish Members did not expect it to come on, and I did not think it was worthy of being considered an important factor.

*SIR C. PEARSON said, he should have assented to the hon. Member's view of the matter had it not been for the use which had been made of the fact in Scotland as representing the way in which Scottish business was neglected in the House of Commons. So far as he could judge, the Association which had already been mentioned, and of which the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), he believed, was still the President, had been largely availed of—he did not say created—by Members of this House for what he

might call English consumption. He did not know how many Members were Vice Presidents of it. He thought the time had come when they must protest against the use which was attempted to be made of such an Association—on the one hand, holding out to the people of England that it expressed the views of Scotland on the matter; and, on the other hand, in Scotland assuming the position of renouncing the Association and all its works, and severing connection with it. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy said Scottish business had been neglected for a long series of years, and was still neglected. The hon. Member made two quotations upon the first point—one 20 years old, and the other 40, the latter being, if he (Sir C. Pearson) mistook not, a complaint which pointed not in the direction of this Resolution, but rather in the direction of the restoration of the ancient office of Secretary for Scotland, which had been done. The other part of the hon. Member's remarks on the neglect of Scottish business led him to say that the words "neglect of Scottish business" hardly expressed the truth of the case. It appeared to him they were all, or nearly all, agreed in regretting that Scottish business did not get faster through the House, but, at the same time, it was not absolutely exceptional in that particular. He was not aware that English business got on any faster. But it was not a case of neglect, nor did he regard it as a case of the machinery of the House breaking down except up to a certain point. He regarded the persons primarily chargeable, not for neglect, but for mismanagement in delaying the progress of Scottish legislation, as the Government of the day, if that delay had happened. They were the parties responsible for the division and appropriation of the time of the House. He pointed to the fact that he did not think it would be disputed, whatever might be thought opposite of the conduct of business all round by the late Unionist Government, that during the six years that that Government was in Office Scottish business showed in at least as good a proportion relatively as the legislation for England, Wales, and Ireland. That demonstrated, to his mind, at all events, that there was something not inherent in the machinery of Parliament which was primarily re-

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sponsible for the present state of matters. There were, he admitted, two limitations under which all Governments must approach this question. One was the great difficulty, both as regards the House as a whole, and individual Members of it, which was brought about by the enormous increase of Private Bills. He could only say that the late Unionist Government did their very best, by the introduction of Bills, to remove that difficulty. If the proposals were bad, they might have been amended by fair criticism. The other direction in which they were all agreed that this House could be relieved was by devolution of powers to Local Bodies. Local government had been awarded both to England and Scotland. The bodies thus created were bodies upon whom large administrative or executive powers might be, and no doubt would be, devolved to the relief of the necessity of legislation in this House in certain directions. To say that English votes overbore Scottish opinion was simply one mode of saying that this was a united Parliament, and that England was the predominant partner. They did not in one sense object to English votes overriding, as was said, Scottish opinion, because, if it was a price to be paid, it was one they were willing to pay for membership of an Imperial Parliament, and it was astonishing to him to find Scottish Members taking objections to the Divisions on the Scottish Local Government Bill when not so many months ago they had welcomed Welsh and Irish votes, not to speak of Scottish votes, to vote down the English majority on purely English questions. Another consideration ought to make this House throw out the Resolution. This Legislature was proposed to sit in Scotland to deal with purely Scottish affairs. Passing by the difficulty of drawing a distinction between affairs that were purely Scottish and those which were not, was it not too much for any hon. Member to move such a Resolution without even telling them what he proposed as to the relation between the membership of the Scottish Legislative Body and the membership of the Imperial Parliament? Were the Members of the proposed domestic Legislature to attend the Imperial Legislature at Westminster or not? If the Members of the Scottish Legislature were not required to attend at Westminster

the scheme would bear separation on the face of it, and, not only so, but would deprive Scotland of her fair share of the management and control of Imperial concerns. On the other hand, if they were required to attend at Westminster, was it not plain that the difficulty which was expounded at length last year would arise—namely, that either the Scotch Members, besides having a Legislature of their own, would turn the balance in the Imperial Parliament on Irish or English affairs, or else that they must walk in or out according to the subject-matter of discussion? The Bill of 1891 enacted that they should be *ipso facto* Members of the Imperial Parliament, or rather that the Members of the Imperial Parliament should be *ipso facto* Members of the Scottish Legislature. The present Prime Minister (Lord Rosebery), speaking in Edinburgh in 1892, said—

“ I am far from being one of those who would throw any discredit on the simple and elementary proposition that to discuss distinctly Scottish affairs the best persons are elected Scottish Representatives, but I will say in all seriousness I have great doubts as to whether that obvious proposition is best carried out by making them Scottish Members of the House of Commons. I believe that you elect your Representatives to go to Westminster on one footing, and that if you had to elect your Representatives to a local Parliament you would choose them from a more large and a more restricted point of view.”

The noble Lord added that it would be necessary to draw a clear line between the persons elected as Imperial Representatives and those elected for local purposes. Until a repudiation of that position was forthcoming from someone who was responsible for the only Bill on the subject that had yet been put in, he must assume that that Bill represented the views of average Scottish Home Rulers, and, if so, he must leave them to settle their accounts with their chief, Lord Rosebery. The situation in which the House had been placed by this Motion was one of extreme interest. The Motion had been introduced, of course not intentionally, in the middle of a discussion upon—he did not like to say an alternative scheme of Home Rule—but, at all events, a proposition which was supported last night upon some such grounds. What he was anxious to get at was the position of the Government upon the Motion now before the House. Which of the two proposals did the Government mean to support? Did it mean

to say, "We desire a Scottish Legislature sitting in Edinburgh, and also a Scottish Grand Committee sitting upstairs?" He thought it was too late for the Government to say, as they had done on previous occasions, that the matter was one on which they had no views and no policy. Did they mean business on the present occasion, and, if so, did they mean business upon their own Grand Committee Resolution, or were they still in the frame of mind in which the Prime Minister was about nine months ago in another place, when he said, referring to a Scottish Home Rule Motion—

"Is this fatal Motion to become a precedent for future deliberations? If so, I can see what will happen. Some noble Lord will rise and ask Her Majesty's Government what are their views about the Creed of St. Athanasius. No one will deny that that deals with subjects much more vital, and much more important, and on which it is much more imperative to form an opinion than on the question of Scottish Home Rule."

What had the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan) to say to this? A Government which had pledged itself, first, to give Home Rule to Ireland, and, secondly, to give nothing to Ireland which it was not ready to give to Scotland, was bound to answer the question, and not to put it off as they had done on a previous occasion by a statement that they had no policy upon the subject.

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): Mr. Speaker, last year I took part in a Debate on this Resolution, and I then made a speech in support of it. Certainly, I am very unwilling to repeat a speech of that length to-night; but I know that there may be some hon. Members present now who were not present then, and I certainly am unwilling to give a silent vote upon this occasion. My vote will be given in favour of the Resolution of my two hon. Friends who, like the hon. Friend I supported last year, ask for a separate Legislature for Scotland. [*Ironical Opposition cheers.*] Oh, I do not mind any scoffs or hard words that come from the Opposition. I have learnt by the experience of yesterday that it is not necessary to bring forward a sweeping change and to accompany it with violent, subversive, and revolutionary language in order to be charged with subverting the

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Constitution of the country. Yesterday I brought forward a practical and workmanlike proposal for adding a third to the two existing Grand Committees in this House. [*Opposition laughter and ironical cheers.*] I think, Sir, that, considering how the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down was listened to, gentlemen opposite might give me a fair hearing. Well, that was a proposal for enabling Scottish business to be better done in this House and English business to be better and more easily done. On that occasion I was denounced in language which would have been quite strong enough if the Government had then and there proposed to separate the two Kingdoms. That proposal represents what the Government, as a Government, intended to do in order to meet the great demands of Scotch business and the great and growing national feeling of Scotland. They believe that in making that proposal of a Grand Committee they have done a really useful work for Scotland, and they are more confirmed in that belief by the opposition which it has aroused, and which shows that something has clearly been done for the great principle of devolution and for the great principle of management of national affairs in accordance with national opinions. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Pearson) asks me whether the Government mean business in this matter. They do mean business.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: In which matter?

*SIR G. TREVELYAN: In the matter of the Grand Committee. They intend to carry the Grand Committee through by every means which they can possibly employ, and by staking everything upon it, and up to that extent they are prepared to pledge and bind themselves to the Scotch Members. Further than that on this occasion the Government, as a Government, do not intend to go. As regards individual Members, whether on this Bench or elsewhere, they must use their own judgment and their own way of looking at the public interests in order to determine in what direction they should vote. For my own part, I am very glad that this question has been brought forward. There is very great use in an abstract Resolution for the purpose of promoting public questions, and there is very great use in taking a Division in order to show what real, solid

backing of public opinion, represented as we believe that public opinion is, by the balance of Parliamentary opinion, there is in the country. It was the opinion of the late Professor Fawcett that there is no means by which a great public question can be pushed forward with such certainty as by the advocates of that question showing their belief in it by supporting their opinion in the Lobby. This question is going forward, although the right hon. Gentleman opposite thinks it is going backward. In the last Parliament 30 Scotch Members voted for a separate Legislative Assembly in Scotland; 40 Scotch Members voted in favour of it in this Parliament, and we shall see how many will vote for it to-night. I believe the question has progressed. Another 12 months have gone by, and there has been another 12 months' block of Scotch business. There is great unanimity in Scotland in favour of the measures they cannot get, and a greater determination to have them. The right hon. Gentleman opposite gave other reasons for the block in Scotch business than those which were given in the two excellent speeches in which this Resolution was moved and seconded. The right hon. Gentleman said the Government were responsible for the appropriation and division of the time of the House. I thoroughly allow that, but they are not responsible for the amount of the time. The time is limited in amount; and the Government, as Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo said when he was asked for more infantry, cannot make time which does not exist. There is no way of making time except by the received method of developing the work of the Committee of the whole House upon Committees upstairs, and by the more heroic remedy proposed by my hon. Friend below the Gangway, of devolving the business of the House upon Local Bodies of sufficient dignity. The right hon. Gentleman opposite says he is in favour of devolution to Local Bodies. I did not quite catch the full meaning of his argument, but he spoke of County Councils and, I presume, District Councils, Parish Councils, and Municipal Councils, and said that we could devolve the work of Parliament upon them. Well, Sir, there is very little of the legislative work of Parliament that you can devolve upon any body unless it be to a Committee or a genuine local Parlia-

ment. But I must own that whenever we tried in the last Parliament to devolve on Local Bodies some little part of our own duties, we met with very small success. We proposed to devolve on the County Councils the power of acquiring land for public purposes instead of obliging them to come to Parliament for Provisional Orders. Forty-six Scotch Members were in favour of that change and 12 against it, but unfortunately the Scotch Members were not allowed to have their own way. We proposed that County Councils should have power to protect rights of way—power of a sort which in some degree is at present held by them. Forty-three Scotch Members were in favour of and 12 against that proposal, but the Scotch Members were not allowed to have their own way. We proposed that the County Councils should be allowed to regulate their own duties of health. Forty Scotch Members were in favour of that proposal and 12 against it, but again the Scotch Members were not allowed to have their own way. The right hon. Gentleman told us that those who had spoken up to this time in support of the Motion had only used the old arguments. Well, after a reform has been for some time before the country you may be pretty certain of one thing, and that is that if you have a good argument in its favour it probably will be an old one, because the arguments in favour of a reform are few, simple, and strong, whilst those against it, if it is a good reform, are many, new, and ingenious. In what respect, I would ask, has it been shown that it would be dangerous to have a Parliament for Scotland? Have we been told that the country is too small and unimportant, when it has a population as large as a second-class Kingdom, and is a country with manners, customs, and laws of its own, and an administration of its own? Have we been shown that the population to which these powers are asked to be entrusted is a population that cannot be trusted with them? Have we been shown that the Scotch people are a people in which classes are divided by deep and bitter differences, and cannot be allowed to fight their own battle within their own confines without being kept in order by a Parliament sitting in Westminster? Have we been shown that Scotchmen do not understand and are

unfit to manage their own education, their own Universities, their own municipal affairs, their own local traffic, and all the other matters which concern the morality, the welfare, and the prosperity of the country? No, Sir; let hon. Gentlemen show that Scotchmen are not fit to have that self-government which is enjoyed by many smaller, poorer, and much less intelligent nations, or let them allow that we have indeed a good case. My belief is, that this feeling in Scotland in favour of Scottish self-government is growing and will grow, and I hope the Division to-night will show that many Scotchmen want it and that many Englishmen, Irishmen, and Welshmen are willing to help them to get it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am inclined to think that the speech we have just listened to from the right hon. Gentleman is a unique performance in our Parliamentary annals. The Prime Minister of the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman is a Member, speaking upon this very question of Home Rule for Scotland not long ago, said—

“I have not the gift of enthusiasm possessed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland, which carries him a great deal further than that, and I am not responsible for all his opinions.”

I do not think that when the Prime Minister delivered himself of that interesting verdict upon his own colleague he could have foreseen the performance upon this very subject which that colleague was destined to execute within a few months of the time at which that utterance was made in the House of Lords. For what is it the right hon. Gentleman has just done? On Monday, the 2nd of April, he comes down to this House and makes a speech in favour of Scotch Grand Committees which will have the effect of handing over to Scotchmen a power over the legislation dealing with Scotland not possessed by Englishmen, Welshmen, or Irishmen. That proposal is discussed, but is not divided upon. Some of the most important criticisms on it have yet to be delivered. But on one of the days of the week sandwiched in between the day on which that proposal is made, and the day on which it has to be decided upon, the same right hon. Gentleman comes down to this House and tells us that he, though an Englishman, is so enamoured of Scotch liberties that,

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not content with getting Scotchmen privileges in this House which no other nationality possesses, he desires in addition to give Scotland a separate Legislature! Sir, was there ever such a comedy performed in this House; was ever legislation made more ridiculous? Have we ever seen—has the oldest Member in this House ever seen—a performance like this, in which the same Minister proposes on two successive days these two inconsistent schemes, and on the second day, when he himself is advocating a change which will rend in pieces the Constitution of this country, finds himself supported during his speech upon the Bench by three Law Officers, two Under Secretaries, and no Cabinet Minister at all? The Secretary for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) and the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) are present, but they only came in for the peroration. During the progress of his speech I anxiously watched to see who were the supporters on that Bench of this second edition of the right hon. Gentleman's proposal for expediting Scotch legislation, and I am accurate in saying that they consisted of two Scotch Law Officers, one English Law Officer, and two Under Secretaries. Sir, this is to make the House of Commons ridiculous. I did not hear the speech of the hon. Gentleman who proposed this Motion, and I am ready to believe everything good of it; but I have heard all the other speeches, and the idea that we are to sanction a change which will fundamentally alter the Constitution of this country and which will reverse in its most essential particulars the Act of Union passed some 180 odd years ago—that we are to reverse that legislation after a Debate of this kind, in which my countrymen have evidently set it before them as an object that they are to prove to the world at large that they can appreciate a joke—is really too absurd. Now, Sir, I listened to the admirable literary exhibition of that English Member for Fife-shire, whose books we have all read with delight and whose speech to-night was very interesting and amusing; but it was not a speech, if I may venture to criticise the hon. Gentleman, which was an adequate preface for a great Constitutional change. The humorous treatment of Scotch legislation is a very good pastime for the House of Commons in its more wearied moments,

but it is not, I venture to say, a proper preface for passing a Resolution which, if acted upon—and I believe it never will be acted upon—would make a revolution in our affairs which hardly any patriotic Scotchman has contemplated without horror for the last 100 years. The element of comedy, the elements contributing to this Parliamentary farce which we have been listening to to-night, have not been contributed by my own countrymen alone. A Member for Wales intervened in the earlier part of the Debate, and that hon. Gentleman, the Member for Flintshire, was only stopped by your intervention, Mr. Speaker, from giving us his views on Welsh Home Rule, and although he was not permitted to develop at length his argument upon that great theme, he made it perfectly clear to the House that there was no argument to be advanced in favour of Scotch Home Rule which could not be advanced with equal force in favour of Welsh Home Rule; not only with equal force but with greater force, for whereas about half the Scotch electors who voted at the last Election were strongly opposed to Scotch Home Rule, I believe, though I have not verified the figures, that the proportions who supported Members holding the political views of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Flintshire are probably greater. But even Wales does not stand alone in this appetite for a separate Legislature, which is gradually growing up in every part of the Kingdom. [*Ministerial cheers.*] London wants one. Why is that not cheered by hon. Gentlemen opposite? Why are they going to refuse to London what they want to give to Wales and long to give to Scotland? London is larger in population than Scotland, a very great deal larger than Wales, and I believe even larger than Ireland, and I cannot conceive any argument that can be advanced in favour of Home Rule for Scotland, Wales, or Ireland that cannot be advanced in favour of Home Rule for London. If there be such an argument I desire to hear it. It has not been advanced in this House, and I wait for it. If we are to have Welsh, Scotch, Irish, and London Home Rule, why may I not, as a Lancashire Member, claim Lancashire Home Rule? The population of Lancashire is not inferior to the population of Scotland. Certainly, Lancashire and Yorkshire together are far in excess of the population

of Wales, and I do not know that they are inferior in intellect and in the power to manage their own affairs. Do you propose to have a separate Parliament for Lancashire and Yorkshire? If not, why do you not propose it? Why are we to be put off with this futile and inconsequent treatment of a great Constitutional question? Why are we to be dragged down here at the far-end of a Tuesday evening in order to hear Scotch jokes upon Scotch business, but not to hear one single argument worthy of the great subject which hon. Gentlemen in their more flippant hours appear anxious to treat of? Is the constitution of this country a matter to be treated upon in this House in the absence of the Leader of the House—in the absence of every Cabinet colleague of the Leader of the House, except one Scotch Member and the President of the Local Government Board; are we actually to be asked to come to a decision on questions like this when our natural guides have chosen the better part and gone to bed? It is turning, if I may venture to say it, the privileges of private Members into a farce when they ask us to come to these momentous decisions under circumstances and upon grounds like these. Neither the arguments that they have advanced nor the circumstances under which they have been advanced nor, if I may say it with respect, the men by whom the arguments have been advanced are of a kind to command the assent of the House of Commons in a controversy which touches nearly in its issues the greatest topics which this House can deal with. I have abstained, as the House will see—and it is only following the example of every speaker who preceded me—from touching upon the real merits of this question, because I consider that the circumstances under which it is brought forward have rendered discussion of the merits absolutely absurd. In no speech that has been delivered to-night, neither in the speech of the Seconder—I did not hear that of the Mover—nor in the speeches of those who have supported him, nor in the speech of the Minister for Scotland himself, has this topic been treated on its merits; and the idea that the Act of 1707 is to be reversed on a Tuesday night between half-past 9 and 12 upon such speeches as we have heard is to say that this House has repudiated its main functions. I think before the

Secretary for Scotland asks us to accept the Motion for which he is going to vote he ought to induce at least a moiety of his own Cabinet to support him by their presence; but in the absence of the Government, and in the absence of any argument urged from any quarter of the House adequate to the great theme on which we are nominally engaged, I trust the House will show its contempt for the proposal and the manner in which the proposal is introduced by rejecting it without ceremony in the Lobby.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 180; Noes 170.—(Division List, No. 12.)

Resolved, That it is desirable, while retaining intact the power and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, to establish a Legislature in Scotland for dealing with purely Scottish affairs.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Am I in Order, Sir, in asking the Government whether they propose to bring in a Bill?

[No reply was given.]

PUBLIC BUILDINGS (LONDON) BILL.
(No. 79.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, the object of which, he explained, was to give Local Authorities the same powers of acquiring lands for public buildings as was possessed by every Local Board under the Act of 1875. The President of the Local Government Board, the hon. Member for the West Derby Division of Liverpool, and others, who had seen the Bill, all agreed that it was a non-contentious measure which should not be opposed. He did not, therefore, anticipate any opposition from any quarter of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Colonel Hughes.*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEBVRE, Bradford, Central) had looked carefully into the Bill, and he did not see why these powers should not be conferred on the Local Authorities.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

Mr. A. J. Balfour

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND)
PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 2) BILL.
Read a second time, and committed.

MOTIONS.

SOLICITORS (IRELAND) (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Carson, Bill to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to Solicitors and to the service of Indentured Apprentices in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Carson, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. William Kenny, Mr. Barton, Mr. O'Keeffe, and Mr. Macartney.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 133.]

WILD BIRDS' PROTECTION ACT (1880)

AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bill to amend "The Wild Birds' Protection Act, 1880," ordered to be brought in by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Joseph Pease, Mr. Loder, Sir William Ingram, and Captain Bagot.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 134.]

BOARDS OF CONCILIATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to confer additional powers on Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Howell, Mr. Mather, Mr. Montagu, Sir Francis Powell, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 135.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (COUNTY OF LONDON SATURDAY POLL BILL.)

On Motion of Captain Norton, Bill to provide that at Parliamentary Elections in the county of London the Poll shall take place on a Saturday, ordered to be brought in by Captain Norton, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. John Burns.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 136.]

HOURS OF LABOUR (LOCAL AUTHORITIES, &C., SERVANTS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macdonald, Bill to limit Labour in the service of Local Authorities and of Railway Companies to Eight Hours a day, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Samuel Evans, and Mr. Keir-Hardie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 137.]

TEACHERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macdonald, Bill to provide for the Registration of Teachers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Bousfield, Mr. Grove, Mr. Henry Hobbhouse, and Mr. Henry J. Wilson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 138.]

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Seton-Karr, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Liability of Employers for injuries to their workmen, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Walter McLaren, and Sir William Houldsworth.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 139.]

House adjourned at two minutes
before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 4th April 1894.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

OLD AGE PROVIDENT PENSIONS BILL.
(No. 9.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

COLONEL DAMPIER PALMER (Gravesend): Mr. Speaker, I believe the House of Commons never refuses to extend a full measure of indulgence to a new Member when he addresses it for the first time, and had I not felt that I might hope for such indulgence being extended to me I should hardly have had the courage to propose the Bill of which it is my duty to move the Second Reading to-day. Greatness is sometimes thrust upon Members who neither desire nor deserve it, and the position I occupy to-day is entirely owing to the good fortune I had in the Ballot of private Members. This old age pension question is no new thing, and this is not the first time on which the House has been called upon to deal with it. As long ago as the year 1773 a Bill, perhaps not of the same name as that now before the House, but, at any rate, having a similar object in view, was passed by this House, and went up to the House of Lords, where it was rejected. A similar Bill was introduced and passed in 1789. In 1796 Mr. Pitt proposed a Parochial Fund, and in 1817 a Committee of this House recommended that the Benefit Societies should be able to offer greater facilities for provision for old age. That is the position which the question has occupied up to recent times. In recent years it has very much come to the front, and it is an extraordinary fact that at the last General Election there was hardly a platform throughout the length and breadth of the country in which some alteration was not suggested and recommended by candidates for this House, no matter what Party they represented.

It is peculiar to notice that since the General Election legislation, which was sympathised with and which was so much discussed upon public platforms, has been heard very little of. It may crop up now and then, principally at bye-elections, and it will inevitably be found on such occasions that the two candidates compete with one another in the sympathy which they express towards the persons who will be benefited by the passing of a Bill of this nature, and endeavour to obtain votes based upon the sympathy thus expressed. Well, Sir, if that be the case—and I do not think there is any question that it is the case—the country has a right to expect that something shall be done by Members when they get into this House to carry out the pledges they have made on the hustings with the object of obtaining a seat in it. It is the desire to carry out my pledges that animates me to a great extent in my advocacy of the measure now before the House. There appears to me to have been a general consensus of opinion as to the disease which has to be remedied, but there is, unfortunately, not the same agreement in regard to the cure which should be applied to the disease. The position of the old age pension question reminds me of a patient who, stricken with a serious illness, calls in two eminent professional men, who prescribe differently, with the result that the patient is left very much where he was. I will first mention those points in relation to the matter on which there is general unanimity. There is general unanimity, I think, in the feeling that there should be some place for an aged member of the community who has done his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him—a place in which his career might have a more fitting termination than in the workhouse, which carries with it personal humiliation and political disqualification. There is also a general feeling that any scheme having for its object the removal of these disabilities should be one which tends towards thrift, and that we should not, by any measure which might be passed by this House, take away or minimise in any shape or form the self-reliance and thrifty habits of those people whom it is our desire to serve. So far we are all in complete agreement. I think we may go a little further, and say we are agreed

that there are no agencies in existence at the present time which enable a poor man to provide for his declining years. I do not for a moment forget the Friendly Societies. I am perfectly well aware of the enormous amount of good they have done; but it is an extraordinary thing with regard to the Friendly Societies that the benefits they confer and the good they do are almost entirely limited to that period of a workman's life when he is in full possession of his energies, and that the money he subscribes is subscribed principally for the purpose of securing some provision in the case of the sickness or death either of himself or some member of his family. But that branch of the Friendly Societies Bill which suggests to a man that in his youth or early manhood he should set aside a sum of money for the purpose of making provision when he reaches the age of 65 years has only been taken up by the working classes to such a small extent that it may almost be left out of consideration. That is very much the position in which we find this question to-day. This is not the only country in which schemes of this description have been considered, and in some countries not only considered, but passed into law. They have been discussed in various countries on the Continent, but I will only mention the two cases in which the discussions I have alluded to have resulted in legislation. I refer first to Germany, which passed a law in 1889; but the provisions of the law, I think I may say, would not be applicable to the circumstances of this Empire. The German law, quoting it roughly, is something to this effect—that the workman should subscribe a certain amount from week to week of their weekly wages; that to that amount an equivalent should be added by the master, and that those two sums together should be supplemented by an addition from the State. The great objection to the scheme is that the provision made is altogether inadequate to sustain a man when he arrives at an age when he desires to avail himself of a pension. The pension is divided into four classes, and in these the payment varies from 2s. to 4s. 6d. a week, totally inadequate to maintain a man in any degree of comfort. There are other objections to this scheme. In Germany the collecting card passes from

hand to hand, and upon it is marked the contributions that are made, so that such a card carries on the face of it the amount of work done, so that it implies a sort of character, and appears to me to be an inquisitorial system that would not be tolerated by the working classes of this country. Then one can hardly leave out of count, in taking into consideration the different state of affairs here and in one of the large Continental countries of Europe, that upon the Continent there is a law which does not affect us here—namely, the law of conscription, that law which takes away from the early manhood of the men a considerable part of their time, and their duty to the State in that way, perhaps, renders it necessary for the Government of a country in which such a law exists to take such different methods to those which apply in this country where such a law does not exist. I then pass to Italy and France, but I will not detain the House with discussing the suggestions made in those countries, as at present no law had resulted from them. But in Denmark the position is somewhat different; and in speaking of the laws and regulations which exist in Denmark, I would, with the permission of the House, like to go a little more closely into them, because any Member who has read the Bill now before the House will be aware that in this Bill those who are responsible for it have to a certain extent altered and cut out certain portions which are not suitable to this country, but that in the main there is no doubt the provisions now in existence in Denmark are to a considerable extent incorporated in this Bill. In the Danish scheme, which varies altogether from that in force in Germany, we find these salient features. First of all, there is no contribution whatever from the recipients; that the funds that are necessary to carry out this scheme are provided in equal proportions by the State and the Poor Law Authorities. And here there is a difference in the suggestion we make. I am well aware of the great diversity of opinion that exists as to the method by which the requisite sum should be raised for dealing with this pension question and also, I believe, as to the amount. Whatever suggestion might be made undoubtedly there would be a host of objections to it. Then, again, in Denmark the age at

which a pensioner becomes entitled to this pension is the age of 60 years. We have in our Bill fixed the period at 65 years, and we have fixed that period bearing in mind the recommendations of the Committee of this House, which suggested that as the right age. One fact in connection with this fixing of the limit of age will strike every hon. Member who has had any experience of the working classes, both in the country and the towns, and it is this—that undoubtedly the time when a man requires the use of the pension scheme comes earlier in life to the artisan who works in great cities and manufactories than to the man who works in the country as an agricultural labourer under most favourable conditions as to health. Though we appreciate the difficulty, we do not see our way to differentiate it; and, therefore, we have in our Bill adopted the age suggested by a Committee of this House. Then the regulation in the Danish Bill which to me, and those who think with me, commends itself most strongly is this—that in this Bill the sharpest possible distinction is drawn between the deserving and the undeserving. I, for one, think that is a very right and proper measure. I think it is most unfair and unjust that a man who has done his duty through a long life, not only to his family but to his country—it is unjust that in the evening of his life he should be treated in precisely the same way as the drunkard, the criminal, or the improvident; that the better fate should be reserved for him, and on that basis we have drawn a sharp distinction between the deserving and the undeserving. Then there is another point which I think is a right one in the Danish measure, and that is, that there is no taint of pauperism attached to the recipients of the pension. I think that is quite right, because pensions are not unknown in this country, for they are granted from the Lord Chancellor down to the postman, and I do not see why a humble member of the State who has done his duty should not be entitled to claim a pension. I do not think there ought to be the slightest stigma of pauperism attaching to the receipt of that pension, and I do not think there should be any legal or personal disqualification attached. Under the Danish law the funds are dis-

tributed by the Poor Law Authorities; but in our Bill we expressly exclude the Poor Law Authorities from dealing with these pensions, and we do it for this reason—on the ground that the Poor Law Authorities are intensely unpopular, and it would be almost impossible for any pension scheme to escape that limit of pauperism to which we have such strong objections, if it were administered by the Poor Law Authorities. Well, Sir, those are the main features of the Danish Bill. I am quite aware that in regard to this Bill the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain)—who has done so much to bring this question to the front, and to whom on many of the points which I have mentioned I am bound to admit my indebtedness—in works of his has dealt with this question. I find that in an article of his in *The National Review* of February, 1892, he subjects it to a most scathing criticism. What he says is practically this—that the Danish law, as it stands, is a provision for outdoor relief in all cases over 60 years of age, the effect being to check thrift and provident provision, and to discourage it. I hope, however, that such alterations may be made as will enable the right hon. Gentleman to alter or modify that view. We believe that, so far from diminishing, this will encourage thrift and providence; we believe that, so far from doing injury to Friendly Societies, we shall render assistance to them, because there is one clause in the Bill which gives a claim to a pension to a man who has made some provision for old age through the means of a Friendly Society, and if he has done this he will receive a larger share of the pension; therefore, I cannot help thinking that members of Friendly Societies may rely upon it that this Bill looks with favour on their Societies; and when the State offers to a man a pension if he has made provision for himself to some extent, it is an inducement to every working man to belong to one or other of the Friendly Societies in the country. I pass now to the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). I will not detain the House by going into the details of that scheme, but it practically means this: Supposing a man of 25 years of age will save £5, and will deposit that in the

Post Office Savings Bank, the State will add to that £15 more, and then, in consideration of the man paying £1 annually up to the age of 65, thereafter he shall be entitled to a pension of 5s. a week. Of course, suggestions have been made for a man's wife and children, or his successors, if he should die, sharing in the provision he has made. But these are methods that have been discussed on the public platforms and in the Press throughout the country, and I submit to this House that the country itself expects something more than the pious opinions that have been expressed. I believe the country not only expects, but has a right to demand, that we who have on public platforms discussed this question and expressed our sympathy with it, should not in the House of Commons sit down and wait for the next Election, but should make some practical effort to carry into law those changes which we have expressed ourselves so favourable to. I know there will be innumerable objections to this or any other Bill. Some hon. Gentlemen may say the Bill does not go far enough; but what I would say is that on this question, as on any other where there are such strong differences of opinion, it is necessary to walk first and run afterwards, and it is possible, if we can only set the legislative machine going, we may be able to amend it from time to time hereafter. Then there are those who regard pensions as another form of Poor Law relief. I do not think that that is so; but, at the same time, I recognise this—that even under the existing law of the land we have to keep a man who cannot keep himself after 65 years of age, or even before that age; therefore I do not think it any great strain to alter the law to this extent—that we pension every man who has subscribed to certain conditions, while we should not keep him in a state that does not make him submit himself to the personal disqualification and moral degradation of going into the poorhouse. Before resuming my seat I would express a hope that the Government would favourably consider this Bill. I am afraid they may consider it is impossible to consider a Bill of this description at the time the Royal Commission is sitting on this subject, but from my small experience of this House it appears to me

Colonel Dampier Palmer

that on many occasions the appointment of a Royal Commission did not mean that the subject is to be dealt with. In several instances the establishment of a Royal Commission is nothing more nor less than a dilatory Motion. I do hope the Government will permit this Bill to be read a second time, because I believe that the subject with which it deals is regarded with the gravest and deepest interest throughout the country, and I believe it would strengthen the hands of those members of the Royal Commission who are honestly desirous of forwarding legislation in this matter. I have only to say now, I feel deeply indebted to the House for the courtesy with which they have listened to me, and to recall at this moment a criticism I saw in the Press, which was to this effect: that a Bill such as this now before the House was an admirable Bill in itself, but that they were of opinion, having read it through, that it was such a very admirable Bill, that it so thoroughly fulfilled the requirements which the country looked for that they had no doubt it would commend itself to the House and the country, notwithstanding the indifference with which it was supported. I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Colonel Dampier Palmer.*)

*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he had taken great interest in this subject, and especially the Bill his hon. Friend had so ably brought before the consideration of the House. The hon. Member was to be congratulated upon his speech, which was one that all sides of the House would consider to have been interesting in itself, and to have brought this matter fairly before this Assembly. He had been interested in this Bill for many years. He had had the honour of introducing it several times, and he advocated the scheme on which the Bill was framed so long ago as 1871 in a Paper that he read before the Society of Arts called *Pensions for Old Age as a National Question*. This Bill and the Bill lower on the Paper, entitled "Outdoor Provident Relief," formed the basis of the Paper he read, and the principles involved in that paper were really the basis on which

this Bill was framed. His hon. Friend had referred to the Royal Commission. It was true that if they could accomplish all that they could wish they would have been ready to postpone this discussion; but the lucky accident of the Ballot was not to be despised. He had for several years been balloting to get a place for this Bill, and he might have had to go on balloting for many years more but for the good fortune of his hon. Friend. The present Poor Law, they might fairly say, was based on the fear of punishment. The old Poor Law said that if people were not careful, were not provident, if they did not provide for themselves, the law would come in and provide for them, but that it would do that in the most miserable manner possible in order to discourage them from requiring the services of the Poor Law. In 1832, when the Poor Law was first established, there was a deal to be said from that standpoint, for they must remember that previous to the new Poor Law some 90 per cent. of the agricultural population were on the Poor Law, and it was necessary to take drastic measures for an alteration. Now, owing to wiser and kinder administration, that state of things had been altered, and the number had been reduced to 5 per cent. of the population. It seemed to him that by a system of rewards they might reduce this 5 per cent., that they might introduce a system of encouragement to the thrifty, and that was really the basis on which this Bill was founded. As his hon. Friend had said, there were two main principles that underlay the whole of this Bill. First, there was the idea of providing a brighter old age for the deserving poor, that they should have a brighter old age than was the case at present. The second principle was quite as essential as the first—namely, that they should provide this brighter old age in such a way as to encourage, bring out, foster, and stimulate habits of thrift and self-reliance, and, in short, to produce those habits of self-reliance and thrift which were so essential to the prosperity of any nation. Taking those two main ideas, he wished to refer to each in a few words. As regarded the first, supplying a brighter old age to the deserving poor, his hon. Friend had referred to that in a very touching and effective manner. They

all agreed that the old age of a man or woman who had worked well all his life should not end with the workhouse, that somehow or other they should be provided for, and their old age made brighter and happier than was now the case; that a person who had laboured throughout life should be secured against want. His hon. Friend had stated truly that at the present time the State provided for old age, and even for the youth of men and women, for the indolent, lazy, and vicious. They provided for these; they did not allow the Mosaic law—that a man who would not work should not eat—to be carried out; even for the lazy who would not work they found food and clothing. The old who had been known to be vicious, thriftless, and even criminal in life were kept in old age; and it was, therefore, still more reasonable that the thrifty and the careful, who had worked hard all their lives, and added to the wealth of the country, should be kept in some degree of comfort at the public cost when they were too old longer to work. But the sting of their assistance was that they did not discriminate between the persons—they were all provided for alike in a way which, to the improvident and careless, was not a bad sort of arrangement—to the idle and lazy might even be pleasant, but to those who had really worked and done their best, to end their days in the workhouse was miserable in the extreme; and the more miserable and degrading it was to them, the more worthy they had been throughout their lives. All would agree that was a sad ending to a useful though, it might be, a humble life. The question they had to answer was whether they could not find some plan by which, inasmuch as they did provide for old age at the present time, they might provide for the aged in such a way that the deserving and the careful should have an eventide of life brighter and more worthy of a useful life, and at the same time provided on such a system that the system should throughout the whole of life tend to raise and elevate and bring out the best instincts and habits of the people. This Bill attempted to do that, and, from a study of the question, he considered the Bill to be framed on lines which would have that result. The Bill first of all laid down who were

to be provided for. It stated that these persons should be 65 years of age and upwards. Of course, whether they were 65, or older or younger was entirely a matter of detail. It provided that they should be worn out, or past the age at which they were able to earn wages. It further recited that those persons who had been criminals within a certain number of years, or who had been convicted of drunkenness, should not come within the purview of the Bill. Whether the number of years named was too long or too short was again a matter of detail, but what he did want was that the principle should be maintained that, practically speaking, only the deserving poor, in the strict sense, should be included in the Bill. The persons to be encouraged were not those who had spent criminal, drunken, or vicious lives, but those who had, by a heroic struggle, maintained a higher standard of living. Therefore the Bill laid down that the deserving at the age of 65, who had not been able to provide sufficient to keep themselves in reasonable comfort in their old age, should be provided with a pension varying in amount on one condition. That one condition was the pivot of the whole Bill, and it was that the persons should have made an effort to do something, however small, for themselves. It recognised that though they might not have provided enough, still they had done something, and the more they had individually done for themselves the more the State would do for them to enable them to make their old age bright and happy. Therefore, the essential condition of the Bill was that there should be, on the part of the individual who received the benefit, some clear and tangible evidence that he or she had made an effort throughout life to deserve the advantages which this Bill offered. There were three ways in which this one condition of self-effort should be shown. All the other matters might be modified in detail, but it was a primary condition of the Bill that this principle of self-effort must be maintained. The first class of persons who would derive the benefits of the Bill were those who had never received any Poor Law relief at all during their life. If a person be recognised to be a deserving person, and could prove at the age of 65 that he had received no Poor Law relief,

he was to receive the largest pension—namely, 7s. a week. Secondly, there might be those who had at various times received relief, but who still had done something for themselves. They might have joined a Friendly Society, put money into various Benefit Societies, or saved money and purchased small annuities, and so on, and those who at 65 could prove that they had done this would receive 3s. 6d. a week plus a sum, not exceeding 1s. 9d., which would be equal to the amount they had saved themselves. Thus a person who had saved 1s. a week by his own exertions would receive 3s. 6d. a week plus 1s., which, added to his own 1s., would make 5s. 6d. a week. If he had saved 1s. 6d. a week he would have that amount additional, and if he had saved 1s. 9d. he would receive 1s. 9d., which was the maximum. He would thus receive 5s. 3d. as pension which, together with the 1s. 9d., would give him 7s. per week, therefore the more he had managed to put by the more he would be given under this system, provided he was not able to keep himself in comfort in his old age. The decision as to whether he was sufficiently well off to provide for himself was left to the Local Authority, who would investigate the different cases. In order to cover exceptional cases which might exist—namely, those in which persons through various causes over which they had no control had been unable to make provision for their old age, it was provided that they should have a pension on reaching the age of 65 if the Local Authority, on an investigation of the cases, found there were special reasons for allowing a pension. Let him show the different effects this measure would have over some of the very crude proposals which had been made with regard to pensions. Some had advocated that everybody arriving at a particular age should have a pension. There could be no scheme more fatal to the interests of the public than that. If everybody on reaching a certain age was to get a pension they would take away all inducement to be thrifty, would encourage in every possible way extravagance, and do away with those principles on which alone people could help themselves—namely, encouraging the gradual means of extending their own independence. If every poor deserving person in this

country on arriving at 65 was to get a pension of 7s. a week because throughout the whole of his working life he had never received any relief, surely it must be obvious to the House and to everybody else what an immense difference that would make in the whole system of out relief. What an incalculable benefit it would be to the poor themselves! What a totally different spirit it would infuse throughout the life of these poor people! They would go through life never knowing any Poor Law relief, and at 65 they would come to the community and ask for a pension because they had during their lives saved themselves from any relief by the Poor Law. The same remark applied to those who asked for the smaller pension of 5s. 3d. because they had been able to save by their own exertions the sum of 1s. 9d. The difference would be immense. They would come at 65 claiming that they had done something for themselves, and the effect on their working life would be totally different to what it was at present, and the whole system of relief and the living and habits of the people would be immensely changed. But there was more than this. If this spirit was instilled the very fact that people had got into the habit of living without the aid of the Poor Law relief, and of providing for themselves, and the non-receipt of relief being required as a qualification for a pension, would ensure such habits and qualities throughout life as to enable them to dispense with a pension in many cases, whilst it might be hoped that some day the great bulk of the people would be able to provide for themselves. He had seen many cases in which people beginning to save by very small sums had achieved results not thought possible. Our present system of giving relief tended rather to thriftlessness than to the encouragement of thrift. The system he advocated would tend altogether in the other direction to that of our Poor Law. Whilst the Poor Law system gave little, if any, encouragement to thrift and self-effort it absolutely encouraged the reverse. A labourer on 15s. a week, who had always kept himself and family, was treated just the same as the man who had had 20s. or 40s. a week, and who had been of drunken and improvident habits, and had not provided for himself or family even when in the

receipt of his full wages. Why should the labourer, therefore, make an effort to provide for the future, knowing as he did that when old age came upon him he would be treated exactly the same as others, whether he were careful or not? He knew as well as they that he could save very little. Yet the only chance of the people really progressing was that they should make an effort to do something. However little this was it was of essential importance if they were to promote their own happiness in the future. The only way in which a nation could be really prosperous was by all classes making an effort to provide for themselves, and a nation's prosperity and strength were largely measured by the way in which the smaller and poorer persons had made this provision. If from sentimental motives, from political cowardice, or worse, they ignored this principle of self-reliance, including that for old age, they destroyed the very fibre upon which society must exist. The principle of this Bill was to develop and make it obviously in the interest of the humblest to try and do something for himself. It promoted thrift and self-reliance by natural means of self-interest, and although he should say a few words in a moment on the cost of the scheme, and show it would be absolutely more economical than our present system, yet he might here state that the more money that was paid under this Bill the greater would be the evidence of prosperity at the bottom of the social ladder, whereas under our present Poor Law the greater the cost the greater the misery. There were some details of importance in the Bill which, however, he would only just touch on. In the first place, it was proposed that this Bill should not be worked by the Poor Law Authorities in the districts. They did not at all want to introduce the Poor Law in dealing with the cases of deserving people who had worked well all their lives. In the second place, the pension was not to disfranchise; and, in the third place, the whole amount required was to come from special rates levied in the district. Some people thought that these funds should be provided out of the Imperial expenditure, but these pensions would be much more local than Imperial, and should, in his opinion, be provided for by means of rates, but this

was, of course, a matter of detail. Another very important point was that the scheme did not involve a system of bookkeeping throughout the life for each of the 33,000,000 persons in the country. Those who had had no practical knowledge of the working of such schemes could have no idea what the bookkeeping of millions of accounts meant. It was his good fortune to be connected with a small institution with only 100,000 accounts, and his experience there showed him that if they were to have accounts and bookkeeping for 30,000,000 or 40,000,000 of people making periodical payments for old age the machinery would be so enormous as to break down the whole scheme. The Bill proposed to allow the people to manage in their own way until they were 65, and then when they were 65 the Local Authority looked into the facts and ascertained whether the cases were those in which pensions should be granted. The question of cost was an important matter, and the absolute cost of this system would diminish in proportion as it was taken up. If it were largely adopted the cost would be less than if it were only partially taken up. Roughly speaking, there were about 1,300,000 persons of 65 years and upwards in England and Wales. He did not exclude Ireland and Scotland from this scheme, but simply gave the numbers for England and Wales because they had the statistics at hand. Of these 1,300,000 there were about 245,000 now over 65, who were in receipt of Poor Law relief at a cost of £2,500,000. They knew perfectly well that by a more careful administration of relief these numbers had been greatly reduced in certain places, and he believed if they would carefully administer relief as they proposed to do by this Bill, the tendency would be largely to reduce the number who would need pensions. For argument's sake he would suppose that the whole of the 245,000 over 65 and upwards who now received relief received pensions. He would take the three classes. Suppose they all received the highest pension the Bill gave them—namely, 7s. a week, because none of them had ever received relief during their lifetime, the result of that would be that they would receive about £4,500,000. From that, however, would have to be deducted the £2,500,000 which they now

received, leaving a net expenditure of £2,000,000. But they must remember, if they supposed that all persons over 65 years of age who now received relief sought to obtain a pension in the future because they had never received outdoor relief, they might take it as a corollary on that that during the whole period of their lives all the others who died before 65 would never have received relief also. The broad fact that they had built up a system which led to the result that all persons who arrived at the age of 65 had not received relief during life would be a fair indication that all others would practically be in the same position; therefore taking the whole cost of this proposal at the highest rate they would really and truly have a reduction of expenditure, because the whole cost of relief at the present time was £8,500,000, so that even if this scheme only promoted pensions for those who now received relief after 65, and they were to double the number, the cost to the community would be practically the same as it was at present for Poor Law relief, with this difference: that the whole working class of the community would have given up all sorts of relief, and at 65 would receive a pension. That was, of course, the extreme and ultimate point. He did not say it would be reached, but he was taking the maximum cost to show how the Bill would work if everybody took the highest pension. If all took the second pension the cost would be even less, and there would be a considerable reduction in Poor Law relief, which was an important consideration. If they were to carry the Bill at once the immediate effect would be to produce some increase, because there were many persons in the workhouses now who were deserving of pensions. But the ultimate result of the measure would be that the larger the number of persons who adopted the bigger pensions the better it would be for the community, because the smaller would have been the expenditure throughout their lives upon the relief, which they all wished to see reduced. If the scheme were adopted the ultimate result would be rather a saving than a loss to the community in the rates, and although he was very keenly interested in reducing rates, he said that the rates were of no importance whatever in comparison with the main principle of the Bill, which was to do

something to foster habits of thrift and care among the people, and thus reduce poverty to a minimum in this country. He should like to say a word or two as to the objections raised against the scheme. First, there was the objection that there would be trouble and difficulty in tracing the history and antecedents of each applicant for a pension at the age of 65. He granted that there would be some difficulty, but that difficulty was essential to any scheme of sound aid. The essence of relief of the people must be based upon careful investigation, and although in this case some difficulty must arise, still they must remember that at the age of 65 it would be done with once and for all, and, again, the investigation was not so serious as some might think. There were, roughly speaking, 100,000 persons who arrived at the age of 65 every year in this country, and about one-fifth of these went on the Poor Law. There would be 20,000 cases to investigate, but there were about 15,000 parishes, so that it would only be a little more than one case in each parish. No doubt there would be more cases in some parishes than in others. The second objection was that the poor could not do anything for their old age, and that to ask them, particularly by those who were better off, was a mockery. It was very easy, no doubt, to be popular and say these sort of things in these times, but the fact remained, whether trimming politicians liked it or not, that the people could and must do something for themselves, and it was kinder and more patriotic to ask them to do something than to say everything was to be done for them. Conceal it as they might, whatever was done for the people ultimately cost them far more than they received, in some way or other, such as by increased rates, reduction of wages, and employment, and other things, so that actually they did ultimately pay more than they received from any system of relief. The people could do something for themselves; they were willing to do something, and the greater facilities they gave them the more readily they would avail themselves of these advantages. He had seen many instances of what self-effort in pence might do, for the poorest accounts beginning with pence became many pounds. Could anybody say that one bowl of tobacco a

day, or one glass of beer, or one ounce of tea a week might not be spared by even the very poorest? And to sacrifice so little of any one of these articles he had mentioned, from the age of 20 to 65, would enable people to obtain the largest pension referred to in this Bill. They must, in considering this question, look at what the people had done for themselves. Look at the old Trustees Savings Banks with their £40,000,000; the Post Office Savings Bank with £80,000,000 or £90,000,000; the Co-operative, Building, and Friendly Societies, numbering hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of members, a total capital altogether of £200,000,000 or £300,000,000 sterling. A few years ago it would have been said it was impossible for the people to do these things, but they had done them, and were prepared to do more if facilities were given them. In his judgment, persons who had helped to found those institutions for thrift had done more good than many of those who promised to give old age pensions to everybody, whatever their qualifications. Parliament was bound to foster those habits of thrift which the people of this country had developed to so large an extent for themselves and which were so essential to their welfare. His hon. and gallant Friend talked of the malady of old age. It was really a malady, and should be treated like a broken leg. A man with a broken leg was not able to walk; and the only way in which the broken leg could be mended was by carefully bandaging it round at first and allowing its strength to return by degrees, and by their encouraging it to make a gradual effort itself to walk. It could not be disputed that there was something wrong about our present system of old age relief, because it ought to be impossible for any man who had spent a long life honourably to be compelled to seek relief in his old age in the workhouse. It was the broken leg in our social system. We must give it support in such a way that the support could be reduced, so that ultimately by the person's own efforts the leg would be restored as strong as before. No doubt the aim of every person ought to be to provide for their old age. That was the object which our legislation should have in view. But there was a great deal in our social system which could not be

mended by any plan. It would take generations before the existing blot as to old age upon our social institutions could be wiped out by any scheme that could be devised, but the cure was certain in time, if only the scheme was based on the right principle. He apologised to the House for having occupied so much of their time upon that occasion, but he had devoted many years of his life to the consideration of this very difficult subject, and he hoped that that would be his excuse for having spoken at such great length. It ought to be the duty of that House to inculcate upon the people of this country the necessity for preserving their own self-respect, their self-reliance, and their independence, and all legislation in regard to old age pensions should proceed on that basis.

*Mr. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said, he had to congratulate the hon. and gallant Member opposite on the temperate and admirable speech with which he introduced his Bill. The hon. and gallant Member had rightly told the House that this subject was not only great in the numbers it affected, great in the consequences that would follow in its train, but great also in the interest that it excited. The movement of public opinion in the direction of providing some better system of dealing with the relief of old age was one of the most remarkable—one of the most hopeful movements of their time. He took it that the expression of that feeling was one fruit of the great enfranchisement of the people which had taken place during recent years. The poor people had long felt, just as they felt to-day, the inadequacy and the cruelty of the present system of dealing with old age and poverty; while they were unenfranchised they had not the voice, but now that they had got votes they had found their voice and used it. At the last General Election there were few platforms on which this subject was not discussed, and he knew that in the part of the country from which he came there was not a single county address, so far as he saw, which did not contain some allusion to the subject, and a promise—he believed a thoroughly honest and genuine promise on the part of the can-

didate—to give his attention, if he arrived at the House, to some well-considered scheme of dealing with this great question. It was a great question as regarded the number that it affected. He imagined that the question could not be looked at from the point of view of one part of the United Kingdom only, and if they dealt with those who were 65 in the whole of the United Kingdom they came to the number that was, he believed, in round figures about 2,000,000 of old men and old women. Of these, now some 30 or 40 per cent. were compelled to obtain Poor Law relief in some form before they died, and a very large number indeed were in great stress just on the other side of the border, which actually compelled application for relief. Of the people who were under 65, only, he believed, something like 4 per cent. came on the public rates for relief, while over that age it was between 30 or 40 per cent.—a very striking and remarkable difference—and when they remembered that of those who reached the age of 25 the half would attain the age of 65, they saw how large a proportion of the existing population had an interest in what should be done in dealing with this question. The condition under which the great multitude of people lived, they must admit, was one of hard struggle, hard to most of them during the days of their manly or womanly vigour—and a very large number, in spite of their best efforts, were able to do but very little towards providing for old age, and to those who did make an effort in this direction, misfortune, sickness, and calamities of one kind or another, such as the failure of the Liberator Society, for instance, came and swept away the provision which, through the self-denying efforts of long years, they had made. Nothing was more pathetic in village life than the position of old men and women who had subscribed to various small Societies for many years, and who found when misfortune and sickness came upon them that those Societies were bankrupt. The system of pensions was not unknown in this country. It had long been a custom to pension their fighting men and the men who drove the pen in the Civil Service, but for his part it appeared to him that the men of the plough, of the hammer, and of the loom, had an equally large claim upon the nation as the men—neces-

Mr. Bartley

sary, he admitted—who wielded the sword and drove the pen—and when they thought that it was the men of industry who contributed the incomes of these people, and afterwards their pensions, it did seem to him very unreasonable that as a nation they should pension their servants while they (the masters) should be left without any pensions for themselves. To treat servants liberally and well was an honour to any master, whether private or public, but to treat their servants better than themselves was not taught, so far as he knew, by any law, human or divine, and there was nothing in sense or reason to justify such conduct. He knew there was a strong feeling among the poor people when they saw the pensions that were paid to the thousands and tens of thousands who were employed in the Public Service, and when in many cases these pensions went to men who had had very large incomes indeed, it was very hard lines that those who had found this money to pay these salaries and pensions should have no better provision than the workhouse at last. It did appear to him that in attempting, in some way, wisely and prudently to deal with provision for old age, they were doing that which had everything to justify and to authorise it. There were three ways of dealing with this question. The one was to deal with it by purely voluntary means; the second was to deal with it, as the Bill before them proposed, by State-aided Organisations; and the third was to deal with it entirely on national lines. The first two schemes, it appeared to him, had this against them—that they would always have outside of any voluntary agency a large number of people left unprovided for. If they helped a great many, which in every respect was certainly better than helping none, they would not anything like cover the whole ground. And then there was the difficulty of existing old age, which none of the voluntary schemes that he had seen were able to grapple with. He considered that on those grounds the scheme which was most deserving of their support, which had most to recommend it, was the scheme of a National Provident Society—that was to say, that the nation itself should be the area, and the agency by which provision should be made for the old age of all. He would

point out what appeared to him to be the overwhelming advantages of a system such as that. The basis of it would be that out of the Treasury, into which everybody paid, everybody should be entitled to receive, when he or she reached the age of, say, 65. They knew that at present every person in this country, from the time he or she was 15 to the time he or she was 65—that was, half a century—was paying taxes. Our taxes were so laid that they caught everybody. What we drank or what we smoked returned something like half of the whole taxation of the country, and if we had been paying for 50 years into this Treasury, then it was certainly not an unreasonable thing that a certain proportion of what went into the Treasury should be, so to speak, “ear-marked” for our benefit, when we reached a time of life when we must ease off our work and call upon some outside assistance to give us help. The obvious advantage of a national system was that it would cover everybody—it would not leave a single man or woman in the nation unprovided with assistance. Again, they would be perfectly sure they would be insuring in a fund which could not fail, as alas! so many insurance funds did fail people at the present time. It would also be perfectly simple, and the blessings would be immediate. Directly the House passed a measure of this kind, every old man and every old woman would be entitled to receive the blessings of the funds, and in every village and hamlet, in every street of every town and city, the heart of the widow would sing for joy, and the old man would feel a burden of fear lifted off his shoulders that would gladden his heart as no act of this Legislature had ever gladdened it in times past. Then the scheme would be perfectly fair, because everybody would pay. By such a scheme as he was advocating and defending the rich, too, would pay more than the poor. Our taxes were laid for that purpose. And there was no way in which the poor could be enabled to share in the benefits of the rich in a more equitable manner than this, and since in this country riches grew faster than the population it did seem a reasonable thing that out of the increasing riches provision should be made for those with whom the battle of life had gone more

hardly than with their more fortunate brethren. It would also introduce a kind of Christian brotherhood amongst us. It would recognise that we were children of one Father, citizens of one nation, that we owed something to one another, and that the strong should help the weak. We had recently extended our national care to education. We had taken child-life in hand, and had made provision for the free education of all children. Well, the next natural step was to go to the other end of life, and by a national provision to help the aged. Of course he was perfectly conscious that the scheme he was advocating was one which entailed enormous cost. If there were 2,000,000 of the population at the age of 65, and if 4s. a week were provided for them, that would entail an amount of something like £20,000,000 every year. Let not that, however, frighten them. It would be admitted that it would be a good thing if everybody in this country were insured against old age. But the people would have to pay for that insurance, and it would not cost one farthing more to have this money straight out of the Treasury than it would to pay it out of the exchequers of Friendly Societies. Besides, the national administration would be very much more economical than any other administration. Under their complete apparatus for local government they would have agencies all over the country which, he was sure, would be glad, by voluntary unpaid arrangements, to provide for the paying out of this national pension to those entitled to it in their respective districts. They would have an administration practically without cost, and he believed—in fact, he was sure—that the taxpayers of England were perfectly willing to pay the extra taxes to carry out this great privilege and boon. He believed also that, instead of discouraging, it would encourage thrift. Under the existing system the thrifty man had to pay for the thriftless; but under his proposal both classes would benefit equally, and he believed it would encourage thrift, because people would feel that they would have comfortable provision in their closing days in proportion as they were able to supplement by their own savings the amount granted them by the State. A national scheme would have a patriotic influence, too, because it would tend to

make people value the privileges of their citizenship. To the great bulk of the people the law was an instrument for taxing and restraining them, and the benefits they received were not very manifest. But if they had a direct interest in the taxes they paid they would have much more reason to appreciate the benefits of being British citizens than they had at the present time. Without being pauperised they would, under his proposal, be enabled to spend the closing years of life in comparative ease and comfort. He would suggest that there were several sources of income that might be laid under contribution to help this fund and ease the taxes. There was, of course, obviously the large cost—probably some £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 sterling—of the present Poor Law system aiding the aged that would be saved. Then the existing almshouses might be incorporated and made part of a national system, and also the present pension funds of some millions—for it certainly seemed to him that if they went in for national pensions they should treat all pensioners upon the same scale, and they should pay salaries for current work in proportion to its deserts, and that as regarded pensions all citizens should stand upon the same equal footing. Then, besides, there was an amount of several millions a year which was received under the name of tithes, and which everybody expected would at no very distant date be diverted from its present use, and to what better use in these modern and changed times could a great deal of that money be put than to the assistance of making happy and more comfortable the latter days of the veterans of industry? He firmly believed that some day, and that no distant day, as this subject was thoroughly discussed in the nation, the nation would desire its Representatives to carry into effect some such national system of universal public insurance as he had sketched to the House.

*MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said, they had all, he was sure, listened with great pleasure to the eloquent speech of the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division of Suffolk, but whilst listening to him they had, he thought, almost forgotten that the matter they had to consider was the particular Bill before the House. There had been, as the House

well knew, a great variety of schemes submitted to the public dealing with old age pensions. They differed in almost all their details, and gave rise to many difficulties and contentions. The ballot box on this occasion had, he thought, played them rather an ill-turn in bringing this measure forward on this particular day under the circumstances of the present time, because, as the House was aware, a Royal Commission had been sitting for some time considering the question of old age provident pensions. That Commission had been taking evidence with regard not merely to the scheme embodied in the Bill, but with regard to the various schemes proposed by numerous gentlemen. Coming forward at this particular moment the Bill was subject to the difficulty that they had not now before them the other schemes so as to enable the House to compare them with that embodied in the Bill. He thought it would have been fortunate if they had had to-day to deal not with a particular Bill, but with a Motion in support of a general principle of pensions for old age. He was glad to think that in the House there was no difference amongst them as to the principle of old age pensions. No hon. Gentleman who had spoken had said a word against the general principle of old age pensions, and he thought the subject might be said now to have entered upon a new phase. He thought it might be said that the House of Commons was prepared to accept and did accept the principle of old age pensions. He took it that what was meant by "the principle of old age pensions" was that where citizens of this country had arrived at a time of life when they were unable any longer by their work to support themselves, it was the duty of the State towards those citizens, if they had conducted themselves throughout a long life respectably, to provide for them something which was at any rate sufficient to maintain life and keep body and soul together and prevent them being obliged to have recourse to the provision of the Poor Law. Though he did not altogether agree with the hon. Member for Islington that the Poor Law was universally unpopular, yet he was aware that some obloquy did in some districts attach to the Poor Law, and what he understood was meant was that the people

who lived under conditions that gave rise to pensions were to have the pensions paid irrespective of the Poor Law—through the Post Office, or in some other way. As they were all agreed on the principle of old age pensions, he need not detain the House by making observations in regard to that. He would turn to the scheme embodied in the particular Bill before the House. He as an unfortunate ratepayer naturally turned, first of all, to the section of the Bill which provided the mode in which the funds were to be raised. There was considerable discrepancy in the estimates made by the hon. Members who had spoken as to the amount that would be required to carry out a scheme of old age pensions. The hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division had talked in a somewhat airy way of £20,000,000 being required. The hon. Member for South Islington was more moderate, £4,000,000 being the amount of his estimate.

*MR. EVERETT said, the scheme he had propounded would establish a national system, under which every person in the nation over 65 years of age would be entitled to a pension.

*MR. DODD said, he was glad to hear that the £20,000,000 had no relation to the particular Bill, the subject before the House. It was probably not worth while going into arithmetical problems when the figures were so much in the air. There was as yet no agreement as to the method of providing such pensions. In the Bill before them it was proposed that the rates should be increased for the purpose. As the Representative of an agricultural constituency he was bound to protest against this proposal, for agriculture was not in a position to bear any additional rate. He thought it would be found that every person connected with agriculture would say that if there was an interest in the country entitled to be saved from an increase of the present rates it was the agricultural industry. He was not one of those who looked for a moment to protection. All he asked for agriculture was that it should pay its fair share of expense. He did not ask for more than that, and to put this new burden upon the farmer and the occupier of land would be to bring them nearer to bankruptcy. The mode in which it was suggested that the money should be provided made this Bill impossible of

acceptance. He did not, however, say that because this scheme was impossible, therefore, all schemes were impossible. All he did venture to say was that this particular Bill was not the most satisfactory scheme that could be proposed. It was not in itself a satisfactory Bill. No doubt it was difficult to say what should be done with the Bill under the circumstances. It might be said that if the Bill were read a second time there would be ways and means found of removing some of the difficulties and deficiencies of the Bill. There were other points, besides the mode adopted of raising the money by increased rates, on which he objected to the Bill as drawn. For instance, in the distinction made so sharply between deserving and undeserving; and though he would not say some discrimination should not be shown, he would like to see the line not quite so sharply drawn as it was in the Bill. Certainly, if read a second time, it would have to be amended in that respect. None of us were, perhaps, very deserving—even the best—and the very worst were not always altogether undeserving. Coming to the practical point of what was to be done with the Bill at present, first of all, it needed to be amended in regard to the strong line drawn between the deserving and undeserving, and, secondly, it needed to be amended also so as not to interfere with the Foresters, Odd Fellows, Hearts of Oak, Ancient Buffaloes, and various other Orders of Friendly Societies. He would like to see the Bill adjourned until the Royal Commission had reported on the various schemes before it, and then brought forward in competition with other Bills. It was always ungracious to appear to stand in the way of anything good, and he regretted very much to appear to be putting difficulties in the way of any scheme for old age pensions. He hoped the discussion might prove of use. The House was evidently of opinion that old-age pensions should be provided by the State under some scheme carried out under reasonable conditions, and with that he agreed, but this Bill seemed to him so unsatisfactory that he would be unable to vote for the Second Reading.

CAPTAIN NAYLOR - LEYLAND (Colchester) agreed that it would be very much better to postpone this and all other

Bills dealing with the question until the Royal Commission had reported, and he had a certain amount of interest in the matter, as he happened to be pilot of one of the Bills before the House, differing very much, however, from the one before it. He had listened with great interest to the speeches delivered in order to learn the reasons for this proposal being made. With regard to the question of cost, the hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading had not stated what the maximum cost of such a scheme would be. On that subject the various authorities widely disagreed; but there was no doubt, assuming that all the benefits promised by the Bill in relief of pauperism were to be conferred, the capitalised value of the sum of money that would have to be expended every year under such a scheme would be over £500,000,000 sterling. For England and Wales, taking the average expenditure at 5s. each person all over the country, the maximum cost of the Bill would be £16,900,000 a year, from which must be deducted £2,500,000 now expended in relief to aged poor over 65. The proposal before them, therefore, was to increase the burdens of the country by that sum, which he submitted was rather a large proposal for a Wednesday afternoon. The Mover and Seconder of the Second Reading of the Bill spoke of the stigma attaching to pensions coming from the Poor Law Authority. No doubt such a stigma did attach in the minds of some people to those who received Poor Law relief; but he thought the House ought to be informed what authority was to be substituted for the Poor Law Authority for the purpose of making the necessary investigations in the 18,000 parishes throughout the country. If a separate and special authority was to be set up, the expense of administration would at once be enormously added to, probably to the extent of £200,000 a year. There were certain conditions which ought to be contained in any old age pension scheme. In the first place, it was laid down by a Committee some years ago, over which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham presided, that in any scheme the pension should begin to be paid at the age of 65. That was the most important point, for by every year that the age was reduced the cost would

be enormously added to. This Bill, he observed, did lay down that proposition. Again, no scheme should, either directly or indirectly, in any sense go back upon the principles laid down in the reformed Poor Law of 1834. It was well-known to hon. Members what was the object of that reform. It was, briefly, to reduce the enormous amount of outdoor relief, and only to give that form of relief in very special circumstances. But if they gave people pensions, the recipients would be in receipt of outdoor relief, whatever the House might choose to call it. He therefore laid down the principle that in no sense must they do anything to increase the area over which outdoor relief was now distributed. This Bill proposed to give pensions ranging from 3s. to 7s. to people who had never contributed towards those pensions, and, therefore, the people who would have to pay the pensions would be largely the industrial classes. Those who would really have to pay pensions to these would be the classes just above them, and really the poorest classes in the country would provide this tax quite as much as the classes above them. Thus the aim of the Bill was in direct contradiction to the principle laid down by the Committees to which he had referred. Another general proposition laid down by the voluntary committee he had referred to was that no scheme of this description ought to run counter to the great Friendly Societies of the country. According to the terms of the Bill, its author was going to give pensions to 300,000 people at the very least, without asking them to pay for the pensions. At this very moment the Friendly Societies were dealing with this question, and the two great Societies—the Foresters and the Oddfellows—had lately started a system of old age pensions, under which a person who was promised a pension undertook to pay for it; but if under this Bill pensions were to be given to persons who did not pay for them, was there any probability that the members of those Societies would continue to pay for their pensions? The Bill would, therefore, disregarding the proposition of the voluntary committee, compete with the Friendly Societies in the strongest possible way. Politicians in that House and wise people of all kinds talked about the desirability of

reforms and about the excellence of thrift and its value to the nation; but while politicians were talking, the great Friendly Societies had taken the matter in hand and had done more for the promotion of thrift than all the speech-making that had gone on inside that House or out of it. His own view of the subject was that the State should add an equal sum to the amount, whether it be a penny or £100, put away by a person to purchase a deferred annuity at the age of 65, and those annuities might easily be issued at post offices all over the country to persons who were willing to contribute in that way a certain sum of money annually for the purpose. Whatever the House did he hoped it would not do anything to record its approval of the scheme now presented, which was designed to pauperise, and to do nothing else. He rejoiced that they should have employed a Wednesday afternoon in discussing a great social question, for in that way only could light be thrown upon it and some satisfactory scheme evolved which might eventually become law.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, he had listened with some regret to the remarks of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, who had considerably exaggerated the cost of the system proposed. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman would take the whole of those who were likely to come under any pension scheme at the age of 65 he would find that they numbered something like 250,000, and, allowing about 5s. a week for each person, that would give a total of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, instead of £16,000,000, as the hon. and gallant Gentleman suggested. At the same time, there would be in addition a positive saving in our extravagant workhouse system, a system which might have answered its purpose very well in 1834 and later, but which at the present moment was nothing more nor less than an insult to the civilisation of a nation of such enormous wealth as our own. Of course the cost of carrying out any scheme of this kind must be great, but the same thing could be said of the work of any large Department of the State—the Army, Navy, or Civil Service—which the nation thought it necessary to maintain. It was all very well to say such a scheme involved granting outdoor relief, and that people should be left to

make provision for themselves ; and it was all very well for hon. Members and those who possessed all the comforts of life to which they were as accustomed as to the alteration of day and night, but they were dealing here with altogether a different class. He was tired of this perpetual preaching down to people, and if hon. Members were in their position they would find how difficult it was to make any provision for old age. He regretted what the hon. and gallant Gentleman had said as to the effect of the pension system being to pauperise, and hoped the House would not accept the opinion that any such scheme must bear the stamp of outdoor relief. The main objects of Friendly Societies were quite distinct from those of the measure the House was now discussing. Friendly Societies were intended to provide for sickness, loss of work, and almost every kind of misfortune except old age. If the provisions of the Bill were confined to old age pensions, the Friendly Societies would prove helpers in that work rather than otherwise. The hon. and gallant Member who brought in the Bill might rely upon it that thrift was not likely to be secured either by offer of reward or fear of punishment. If a man was unthrifty at 30 he could never be made thrifty by fear of what would happen to him when he was 60 or 70. Thrift really was a result of education, and the hon. and gallant Member, who he knew sympathised with the poor, must remember he was dealing not with inanimate forms, but with human beings whose lack of thrift had tended to increase their sufferings in old age. The question under consideration was an all-important and a truly national question. A man who had honourably spent a long life in honourable labour, and had done his best, though that best might not be much, should have some other prospect in his old age than the workhouse. Many among themselves, perhaps, if they had been placed in the position of having to travel through a hard life with the element of hope taken out of it, might not have been so thrifty, so brave, and so enduring as large numbers of the class of people whose interests they were now considering. Much was said about drunkenness, but probably some of the Members of the House would seek relief from the public-house if they had no

other prospect before them. We had educated the masses of our fellow-men, and had thereby enlarged their wants and desires ; and, therefore, it all the more became the duty of Parliament to see that means were placed within their reach for a reasonable fulfilment of those wants and desires. Society owed a duty to those who had laboured the whole of their lives. Instead of pointing to the workhouse as a refuge to such men in old age, he would place a medal on the breast of each of them as a knight of labour who had added to the wealth of his country, and make provision for him in his old age when he had not been able to make it for himself. It was quite true, as had been remarked, that the Poor Law was regarded by a large proportion of the working classes as a degradation. It was not only a degradation to the men, but it was expensive to the community, and, therefore, alike on economical, social, and humanitarian grounds, the system was bad. He knew there were eminent men, whose opinions were entitled to great respect, among them a former Member of the House, Mr. Albert Pell, who thought the evil of pauperism might be cured by the denial of outdoor relief. It might be done by killing off the paupers or by other means, but he contended that the adoption of such a system would be unworthy of the country and could not be carried out without inflicting a great amount of suffering. The hon. and gallant Member who moved the Second Reading was to be complimented on the fair and moderate claims he made on behalf of the Bill. He seemed to fully recognise the enormous difficulties that surrounded the question, and he wisely claimed no more for the Bill than an attempt to solve some of those difficulties. The main points urged by the hon. Member for North Islington in favour of the Bill were, in his opinion, serious blots upon it. The restrictions in it were too great. The burden to be placed on the administrators of the Bill, to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving, would be really an impossible task. There was, it seemed, to be an inquisitorial term of 10 or 15 years, and it was to be ascertained whether during that time a man had through crime, drunkenness, or in other ways made himself undeserving of assistance. But who was to decide that point? He had known

men and women who, having started well in life with fine mental qualifications and high courage, and having struggled on for a long time, had at last been beaten down to low health and a degraded state by adversity and the hopelessness of their position. Yet they could be called neither drunken, criminal, nor undeserving. They must have no Bill which sat in judgment on those poor people. He would, therefore, discard all inquisitorial conditions as to whether a man had received poor relief, or had saved anything for himself, or had in various ways made himself undeserving of assistance. Large numbers, if not the majority, of working men and women were unable to make any provision for old age out of their scanty earnings. Very frequently the 10s. or 15s. a week earned by the labouring man did not represent more than 1d. per meal per day for his family. Men of that kind he had remonstrated with for saving a shilling a week, pointing out that the money would be better expended on milk or boots, or something of that kind. A man might be doing the greatest harm by saving that shilling, because it might not be a superfluity, but a dire need. It was not always by scraping and cheeseparing possible to save a shilling, and the man who saved it was not always as much to be commended as the man who spent all his wages on necessities for his children. There were large numbers of men who subscribed thousands and tens of thousands of pounds to clubs for aid in time of sickness or want of employment. For instance, there was the fund of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, into which hundreds of men had been paying for 13, 14, or 15 years in the hope of getting some assistance in sickness and in old age, and now were coolly told "there is nothing for them." Were they to be told "You have saved nothing for yourselves?"

MR. BARTLEY said that was specially provided for under the scheme.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS said, he was glad to hear it, but the case of the man with a family, earning 10s. or 15s. a week, to whom he had referred was not provided for under the Bill as he understood it. It had been urged by the hon.

Member for Mid Lincoln that a universal pension system would be destructive of thrift, and on the same ground it was said that the payments under the Bill should come out of local rates and not Imperial funds. He held, however, that this was not a local question at all, but one that affected every man of the well-to-do classes, and all right-thinking and reasonable people belonging to those classes would be willing to pay for it. How much more valuable would a rich or even moderately rich man's possessions be to-morrow if he could feel that every man above 65 in this country was in reasonable comfort! He would feel that he had an undoubted right to all his accumulated property—a thing about which, at present, there was some doubt. If he could feel in the winter time, or in times of special hardship, that all his fellow-men above a certain age were in reasonable comfort, how much sweeter would be his own enjoyments! That was the sentimental aspect of the question. As to the justice of it, the present condition of things, as the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had said at St. James's Hall, was a blot upon our civilisation. If the funds were levied on the local rates, the burden would fall on a particular class; but this was a matter in which the rich should help the poor, and the rich district the poor one, and that could only be done by means of Imperial taxation. He had only one view of the case to urge, and he thought it important. He asked the hon. Gentlemen opposite who were connected with the land, and capitalists and manufacturers who sat on the Ministerial side, to remember the origin of the present state of things. They had a proletariat such as existed in no other country of the world, and that to a large extent was the cause of the state of things which had made the remedy they were now considering necessary. By the processes through which the land had passed during the last 200 years—processes which had been of great economic value to the nation—the labourers, whose case especially they were now considering, had been reduced to the condition of mere wage-receivers; and although they could not go back on that which had been so beneficial to the nation as a whole, yet the facts consti-

tuted a claim upon the nation as a whole, which had benefited by changes that had at the same time inflicted hardship upon a particular class. The labouring classes had been deprived of property left to them by pious donors in former times, and on all these grounds he urged the acceptance of the Bill on the general question of the public good. He hoped the Second Reading of the Bill would not be deferred until the Royal Commission had reported. That would mean the hanging-up of the question for another year. It was an urgent question, at any rate so far as the initial steps to be taken were concerned, and he hoped, therefore, that the hon. Member would carry the Bill to a Division. He (Mr. Collings) should vote with him with a better heart and with more pleasure than he thought he had ever felt in regard to any vote he had recorded in the House before.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): I think it is to be regretted that a Bill dealing with such great and important interests, and which has given rise to large expectations in the country, should not have been postponed for a few weeks until the Report of the Royal Commission was before the House. The hon. Member for Islington admitted himself in the speech he made in seconding the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill that it would have been far better if this Debate could have been postponed. He said, however, that he had trusted to the ballot, and that if he had not availed himself of his privilege the probability is that he would not have secured another opportunity of bringing the Bill on. I admit the force of his plea, but nevertheless it has rendered our discussion somewhat unfortunate and difficult by the knowledge that the matters in question are being investigated by the Royal Commission at the present moment. One of the first acts of the Government on coming into power was to appoint this Royal Commission. We felt that the subject was one well worthy of investigation. I have great sympathy with

the demands made for some alleviation of the condition of the aged poor, and recognise fully what was said by the hon. Member for Gravesend in his very interesting speech. The Commission was appointed, has set to work and nearly completed its labours in as short a time as almost any Commission I have ever known, and I believe it will in the course of a few weeks present its Report to the House. It has had before it, I understand, different schemes for old age pensions. There is the scheme propounded by Mr. Charles Booth, a scheme of a very philosophical character and wide-reaching nature. There is also the scheme which was founded by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, and which has been lately adopted by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. It has also had before it the very scheme which is now under discussion, and I believe I am right in saying that the whole merits and demerits of the measure, whatever they may be, were fully laid before the Commission in all their economic and financial aspects. There are also other schemes which are well-known to hon. Members who, like the hon. Members opposite, have devoted a great deal of attention to this matter, and which are being considered. As a result of this investigation we shall have when the Report comes out a full description of all the schemes, the possibilities of dealing with them, and the benefit likely to arise by their adoption. Under these circumstances, hon. Members must see that I have considerable difficulty in dealing with the question immediately before the House. I think the House will perceive that it is almost impossible that I, on behalf of the Government, should accept this scheme which the hon. and gallant Member has presented to us. Apart from the difficulty of the matter it would hardly be right that while a Royal Commission is sitting upon the subject we should adopt a scheme without having information put before us by this Report as to the details of the schemes which they have had under consideration. Without that information it is not to be expected that I should pronounce definitely in favour of any one scheme. The House will admit that there would be great difficulty in dealing with the financial and economic details of the Bill without having before us all

Mr. Jesse Collings

the facts laid before the Royal Commission, and all the financial considerations involved in the subject. What I venture to suggest to the House, and to the supporters of this Bill, is that they should be content with the discussion which has arisen to-day, and that they should adjourn further discussion on the Bill to a future day after the House has had an opportunity of reading and considering the Report of the Commission. That I believe, on the whole, to be the wisest course to adopt. As I am not in a position to affirm the principle of the scheme laid before the House now, I cannot ask the House to agree with it, nor, on the other hand, should I feel justified in asking the House to disagree with it. I think the best course is an adjournment of the matter. In saying this, however, I want to express thorough sympathy for the hon. Member for Gravesend, and with the hon. Member for Islington in the object they have in view. We know how much the hon. Member for Islington has done in the encouragement and promotion of thrift, and we can all sympathise with his object in propounding the scheme which is the outcome of his desire to contribute more to the welfare of the class for whom he has done so much. At the same time, I must say that it is easy to draw up plans for pension schemes; it is fascinating work, and perhaps many of us have attempted it; but it is difficult to draw up a scheme which will not be open to financial and other objections. Anybody who has taken the pains to make an examination of the scheme embodied in the Bill will know that there are many very great difficulties connected with it. The Bill before us provides that there are to be three classes of persons entitled to pensions. In the first place, the proposal is that all persons over the age of 65, who have committed no crime within 15 years of that age, and who have not been convicted of drunkenness within 10 years—that is to say, all persons who are unable to earn wages, and who declare themselves to be in need of a pension—are to be entitled, on reaching the age of 65, to a pension of 7s. a week.

*MR. BARTLEY: Entitled to a pension; not necessarily a pension of 7s. per week.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: A pension of 7s. per week, I take it.

MR. BARTLEY: A pension not exceeding 7s. per week.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: At all events, I understand they have a right to a pension—that is a vital portion of the Bill.

MR. BARTLEY: This applies equally to the other pensions named in the Bill.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The hon. Member for North Islington considers that these conditions offer a strong inducement to the practice of thrift up to the age of 65. Now, I would venture to point out one effect of that provision. A single man who during the whole of his working life has regularly spent his wages without saving anything, but who has never had occasion to apply for poor relief, is entitled at 65 years of age to a pension of 7s. a week. On the other hand, a man with a large family, and with the heavy burden arising therefrom, and perhaps earning only low wages, if in the course of his life, up to 65 years of age, he once applies for relief either for himself or his children he will not be entitled to the pension.

MR. BARTLEY: Not of that class.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Now, I ask, can that distinction be justified? Now, take the case of a widow with children, who, after a hard-working life, may have upon one occasion to apply for relief. Is that to disqualify her absolutely for the receipt of the pension of 7s. a week, when a man who has been receiving £2 or £3 a week, out of which he has saved nothing, would be entitled to a pension of 7s. a week? I venture to think that comparisons of that kind would become so odious that the position could not be maintained. Let me quote another case. It is a condition provided in the Bill that a person convicted of drunkenness within 10 years before reaching the age of 65 shall not be qualified for the pension. Under this part of the Bill it would be possible

for a man who has spent a large amount of his wages on drink, but who happens never to have fallen into the hands of the police, to get his pension at the age of 65; but, on the other hand, a prudent man, ordinarily sober, and who for the most part of his life has lived a regular life and spent very little in drink—if, upon one occasion, he should get drunk, and fall into the hands of the police and be convicted, he absolutely loses all his qualifications for pension. Again I say that distinctions of that kind cannot be maintained. Again, I observe that all applicants under the Bill as it stands must say that they are unable to earn wages, and are in need. It is possible that a man may be in need at 65, and afterwards become possessed of means or be assisted by relatives; but under the Bill he would still be qualified for a pension of 7s. a week. I do not find in the Bill any provision to meet the case of persons who, having obtained pensions, ought, for some reason or another, be called upon to give them up afterwards. That appears to me to be a matter which cannot altogether be excluded from any pension scheme. Then there is the question of what constitutes residence—the residence that entitles a man to his pension. There are no provisions in the Bill as to domicile, and as the Bill stands, persons coming to England from the Colonies or from foreign countries, or Jews who may come to England from Russia, would be entitled to a pension. Then there are no provisions to secure uniformity in the decisions of the Local Authorities nor fixing the length of residence which should give a local claim. I come to the argument as to the promotion of thrift, which I know to be an object that the promoters of this Bill have deeply at heart. Will it promote thrift, or encourage a man not to spend his wages, if he knows that at 65 he will have a pension of a certain amount reducible by the income to be derived from what he has saved? Will not that condition stimulate a man to get rid of what he has saved as he approaches the age of 65? Again, the Bill appears to contemplate persons receiving the same amount of pension in every part of the country irrespective of the varying conditions of life in different parts. A

pension of 7s. a week to a man and a similar pension to his wife would in some parts of the country be a considerable endowment. There are parts of the Highlands and the western coast of Ireland where 14s. a week is far in advance of the average earnings. On the other hand, in some of the great towns, and especially in London, 14s. a week would not do more than support life. That a person who has received Poor Law relief should not be entitled to a pension on reaching the age of 65 unless he has laid by something is an encouragement to thrift. But there is also a provision that, instead of laying by something week by week, a sum of £10 paid at any time to the Local Authority should entitle to a pension of 3s. 6d. a week at the age of 65. That is equivalent to about £9 a year, and on those interesting terms people may be found to pay the necessary £10 for the applicant. It is in connection with the question of finance that I feel the greatest difficulty about the Bill. The hon. Member for Islington, who went into this part of the case, appears to think that the number of persons who would obtain pensions under the Bill would be the same as the number over 65 years of age now receiving Poor Law relief. That would be in England and Wales about 240,000. But I cannot accept that view of the case. A large number of persons who have never received Poor Law relief would be entitled to pensions on the larger scale (7s. a week), and that number it is impossible to predict. The Bill applies to England, Ireland, and Scotland; and the number of persons above 65 in the United Kingdom is 1,800,000. Of that number, adopting the calculation of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, two-thirds belong to the wage-earning class. Of those, one-half have at some time received Poor Law relief, and therefore the remaining portion are mainly composed of those entitled to claim pensions at 7s. a week. A considerable number of people also will be entitled to pensions on the reduced scale, and according to my calculation the total charge which would accrue to the Local Authorities would be something like £14,000,000 a year, £11,000,000 being the cost of the first-class, and £3,000,000 the cost of the second and third class of

pensions. I shall, however, be glad to have the evidence given before the Royal Commission bearing upon these figures. It is impossible to expect the Local Authorities to bear such a burden, knowing what the feeling of the country is with regard to rates. The charge, therefore, would have to be incurred in the name of the Imperial Exchequer. Further, the scheme would require a very large staff of officials for its administration. The County Councils and Town Councils at present have no machinery for investigating into the antecedents of applicants for pensions. It would be an almost impossible duty for the London County Council to inquire into the case of every person in London over 65 years of age. I make these criticisms in no hostile spirit, but to show the difficulties which must be inherent in any such scheme, and to suggest that the subject requires the most careful consideration before determining which scheme is the best. I have every sympathy with the hon. Member's object, which is to alleviate the condition of the aged poor; but the present scheme is so full of difficulties that I cannot ask the House to accept it. I would suggest that the best course to adopt is to adjourn the discussion until after the Royal Commission has reported. If after that it appears that the Report is favourable to this particular scheme, on behalf of the Government I will promise to give time for the further consideration of the Bill.

COLONEL DAMPIER PALMER : Will the Government give us a day after the Report of the Commission for the further consideration of this Bill?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE : I said that, if the Royal Commission reported in favour of this scheme, then I would undertake, on the part of the Government, that time should be given for the further consideration of the measure.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) : I am myself a member of the Royal Commission to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred, and upon whose shoulders he is inclined to place

the responsibility of the inconclusive termination of this Debate. Now, on general grounds, I think that an inconclusive termination of this Debate would be a matter very greatly to be regretted. We are dealing with a subject which, I believe, creates in men's minds a popular interest, in a subject which is quite ripe for further legislation, and in regard to which, at any rate, I think it would be a great advantage not only to the public at large, but also to the hon. Members of the Royal Commission, that some indication, at any rate, of the feeling of this House should be given. Everyone must share the feelings of the right hon. Gentleman that it would have been convenient if we had received the Report of the Royal Commission before this discussion came on. But my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Gravesend (Colonel Palmer) has obtained an opportunity which comes very rarely to private Members, and I do not think, under those circumstances, that he is to be blamed for having taken this opportunity for introducing the subject to the consideration and careful attention of the House. The right hon. Gentleman suggests that, in the event of the hon. and gallant Gentleman consenting to the adjournment of the present Debate, he would, on behalf of the Government, offer him another day if the Royal Commission reported in favour of this precise proposal. The right hon. Gentleman has told the House that the Royal Commission has had before it an immense number of schemes, some of which he has entirely omitted to mention, and others of which he has, in my opinion, inaccurately described, but as to which it would be impossible for me to say much to-day because, as a member of the Commission, my tongue is tied. It is quite true that the Commission has had before them an immense number of schemes, and if I consider merely the ordinary law of chance, I should say the chances are about ten to one against the Commission accepting in its entirety any one of those scheme. Under these circumstances, therefore, the promise which the right hon. Gentleman makes

us is one which my hon. and gallant Friend will, I suspect, consider to be of but very slight value. The right hon. Gentleman tells the House that he is speaking on behalf of the Government, and that he is personally friendly to the object of the Bill; but then he proceeds to lay down an elaborate series of criticisms, which, if they are accepted, I do not hesitate to say, are not only absolutely fatal to this particular Bill, but absolutely fatal to any other proposal which can by any possibility hereafter be made either by the Royal Commission or anybody else. Because what are his arguments? They can be easily reduced to two. In the first place, he says that any scheme for providing old age pensions will be expensive, which is admitted. In the second place, he believes that any scheme for providing pensions will raise a number of anomalies. The right hon. Gentleman has dealt with a great number of anomalies which he finds in this Bill. Sir, we do not deny that, but I say it is absolutely necessary. It is impossible that the State or any Local Authority can so deal with all the various conditions of the life of the poor as to measure out an equitable concession exactly equal in every case. The whole idea of a pension is that, at all events, it is not to go above a certain income, or below a certain condition. Then it will be at once said that all above or below that line are unjustly treated, and it would be most illogical to deny the truth of the statement. What is the case now? Is it possible to find a greater anomaly than the present anomaly, which treats the industrious poor exactly in the same fashion as it treats the poor who are utterly and entirely undeserving, which measures out to the man whose whole sensibilities are at stake exactly the same treatment of the common workhouse as to the man who had been an idler and a ruffian pretty nearly the whole course of his existence? There is an anomaly, indeed! and I defy anyone to find any worse anomaly in connection with any scheme for old age pensions. It is perfectly absurd for the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board to say he and his Government are friendly to old age pensions, when his whole argument cuts at the root of the

thing itself. The right hon. Gentleman dealt with the schemes which are before the Royal Commission. The present scheme is one of them, and, therefore, I cannot enter upon it. But, curiously enough, the right hon. Gentleman did not deal with another scheme, which has not been brought before the Royal Commission, and with which, therefore, I am perfectly free to deal. Why has not that scheme been brought before the Royal Commission? It would have come before us well recommended. It was brought before the House in the Session before last, when there was a great deal of discussion about the scheme of old age pensions which had become connected with my name. It was brought in as a competitive and opposing scheme to mine, and the Bill in which it was introduced to the House bore upon its back a great number of influential names. It bore the name of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Sir W. Foster). Surely the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, whilst speaking about anomalies of schemes, might have paid a little attention to the scheme which owed its origin entirely to the Parliamentary Secretary of his own Department—a scheme which was brought in when it served an election purpose, which was dropped when the hon. Gentleman got Office, and which neither the hon. Gentleman, nor any of his Friends, has taken the trouble to bring before the Royal Commission. If you want anomalies, here is a scheme which is not only full of them, but which will be more expensive than the one which the President of the Local Government Board has just criticised. Here is a scheme which provides a pension for everybody with the exception of persons—and here come in the anomalies to which the right hon. Gentleman referred—who have ever been convicted of drunkenness. The Mover of the present Bill only proposes that a person shall be excluded from the benefits of the scheme if he should have been convicted of drunkenness within 10 years, but the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board proposes to exclude a man if he has been convicted of drunkenness in his early youth. There is an anomaly. It may be that that is

the reason why the Bill was not introduced to the consideration of the Royal Commission. Almost every single anomaly to which the President of the Local Government Board has referred can be found in the Bill of his colleague, and I venture to say that that Bill cannot be carried into effect without an expenditure of £15,000,000 a year. It is perfect nonsense for those who are professed friends of old age pensions to meet the Bill before the House with petty criticisms of details. If the House is to deal with the subject in that way we shall never see old age pensions at all. The House is now considering the Second Reading of this Bill. It is not customary to reject a Bill at this stage because details are objected to. The House is not now dealing with details, but with principle; and this is the first time the House of Commons has ever been enabled to deal with the principle embodied in this Bill, and to say "Aye" or "No" should a preference and advantage be in the future given to those of the aged poor who can show behind them an industrious and fairly thrifty and honourable life over the wastrel who now has precisely the same treatment as they have. This is the principle which we are called upon to affirm. Does the Government accept the principle? Did they accept it at the time they appointed the Royal Commission? If so, I wish they had shown it in the Reference to that Commission, because then the Commission would have been a very different one—certainly the Report must have been, by the necessities of the case, a different Report. But the whole question was referred to the Commission, and we shall have to say, in the first instance, whether any scheme at all is desirable. There is all the difference in the world between appointing a Commission to inquire into a question generally and between a Commission appointed to carry out a previously settled principle. It is important to know whether there has been any change in public opinion recently on this question. If we knew that, it might materially assist our future deliberations. My opinion is, that no scheme that has been suggested—I speak of those which were published and were well-known be-

fore the Royal Commission was appointed—can be considered as a complete and adequate settlement of the question. The scheme of Mr. Charles Booth is no doubt a complete scheme, because it provides that everybody shall have a pension of 5s. after 65, but he readily admits that the State must find £27,000,000 a year. There is a good deal to be said for it, because it is, after all, largely a question of the transfer of taxation; but, as practical men, are we prepared to waste our time in considering a scheme of that magnitude, and would any Chancellor of the Exchequer undertake to make such an enormous addition to the taxation of the country even for so good an object? If that be granted, it follows that anything we do must be done gradually, experimentally, and step by step. It is not enough to bring forward petty criticisms and objections; to say that a scheme is not complete and does not meet every conceivable case. We must be content to do as we did with the education question, to start gradually, and go on as experience justifies further progress. I look upon the education question as our great example in this matter. We began with a grant of £25,000. There were those who advocated that grant who knew well that so great would be the usefulness and popularity of the system that the country would willingly expend even the £9,000,000 a year to which it has now grown. But any man who had proposed to take £9,000,000 for education when that first grant was made would have been a madman, for the scheme would have been laughed out of court, and no good would have come from proposing it. I look forward to the time when some Minister will be found bold enough to propose to lay aside experimentally what may be considered a reasonable sum towards the commencement of a system of old age pensions, and if that is satisfactory I am not disposed to place any limit on its ultimate development. Without pronouncing any opinion as to the details of this Bill, I may say that I am, and I was before I was appointed a member of the Commission, in favour of the principle of old age pensions, and I am glad to have an opportunity of saying so on this Bill. There is only one offer, it seems to me, which can be made by the

Government which ought to prevent the hon. Member who brought in this Bill from carrying it to a Division, and that is that they will give another day for the discussion of the whole question, or, if you like, for the discussion of this Bill, without making any conditions as to what the Report of the Royal Commission may be. But the actual offer which has been made is absolutely illusory, and the only result, if my hon. and gallant Friend accepts it, would be that the matter will be shelved for the rest of the Session, and the House will not have an opportunity of expressing its opinion on this most important question.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I think it desirable that the House should understand what the Government are doing in this matter. My right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) has said justly that it would be premature for the House to come to a decision upon this Bill or any other Bills of the same character until it has the advantage of the instruction to be derived from the Report of the Royal Commission. I think that is a proposition which will meet with general acceptance. But the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) has complained of the condition we affix. We do not wish to impose any strict limitation. We are satisfied that after the Report of that Commission there ought to be a discussion on the principle of old age pensions generally, or on this particular Bill as embodying that principle. The Government would have no objection to that. Nobody doubts whatever that the object is a desirable one, and the only question is, what are the methods by which it would be possible to carry it into effect? I imagine that that describes the feeling of everybody on both sides of the House, and therefore I have no hesitation in saying that on a question of this vast consequence the Government would feel it their duty, after the Report of the Commission, to give an opportunity for

the discussion of the principles applicable either in some other form or in the form of this particular Bill. I am quite sure the House will feel it would be premature to-day to determine on this Bill. I can imagine great objections to be raised on the part of those who object to charging the cost of such a scheme on the rates. I entirely sympathise with the observations of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) as to the feelings with which a Chancellor of the Exchequer would contemplate a demand for £27,000,000, and I conceive that there are gentlemen opposite who would not be more favourable to placing such a charge on the Exchequer. But there are other matters which eminently deserve to be considered, and I would venture to suggest to the House that, with the promise on the part of the Government that there shall be an opportunity of discussing this matter on a future date, it should not come this evening to what would be a premature conclusion as to a particular Bill or a particular method.

MR. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, the advice of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was no doubt very practical, and was, on the whole, advice which a great many Members would no doubt be very glad to follow. He (Mr. Long) would, however, point out to the right hon. Gentleman that his hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Palmer), who had brought this Bill forward in a manner which had commended itself so thoroughly to all who had heard him, was in a rather difficult position. His hon. and gallant Friend had been able to introduce his Bill at a very early period of the Session, and it had been received with almost universal commendation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had now somewhat altered the position, because up to a few minutes ago it was only by the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) that any criticism of anything like a serious character had been directed against the Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer now said that the

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Government would pledge themselves to give another day for the discussion of the question. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) had suggested that a day might be given either for the discussion of the question as a whole, or for the further discussion of this Bill. That, no doubt, would meet the view of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and of all those who were generally interested in the question, but it could hardly be expected that it would meet the views of his hon. and gallant Friend, who was entitled to reap the fruits of the labours of himself and those with whom he acted, and who was also entitled to benefit by the fortunate position which he had acquired by the ballot. If the Debate were adjourned for an indefinite period without a distinct promise that when an additional day was given it would be devoted to the discussion of the Bill, it would be possible for the Government or for one of their supporters to bring forward a Motion in another form, and the Bill would be in consequence absolutely and completely excluded from any further consideration. It was perfectly true that gentlemen in all quarters of the House would find objections to the special proposals of his hon. and gallant Friend; but it was to be remembered that his hon. and gallant Friend, in the excellent speech he made in moving the Second Reading, told the House that he did not bind himself to the exact provisions and conditions of the measure. On the contrary, he placed the Bill in the hands of the House, and in the most temperate terms invited full discussion of its provisions, and he plainly indicated that if the House would accept the Second Reading he would be willing to deal with its future stages in the most generous spirit, only providing that any alterations that were introduced should provide for the establishment of old age pensions on a sound and economical principle. He (Mr. Long) was extremely anxious to meet the views of the Government, whose difficulty he fully appreciated, but, at the same time, he thought they must appreciate the difficulty in which his hon. and gallant Friend found himself. His hon. and gallant Friend now had the opportunity of asking the House

to affirm the principle that pensions should be granted under certain conditions. There was nothing to prevent amendments being introduced into the Bill which would alter its details respecting the source from which pensions were to be provided. Unless the Second Reading were postponed by a Motion for Adjournment there was little doubt that the House would give a practically unanimous assent to the principle of the measure. Under these circumstances, he did not think his hon. and gallant Friend would be justified in assenting to the postponement of the question now that he had the opportunity of asking the House to say aye or nay upon the question of the Second Reading. Something was said about the attitude taken on this question by candidates for Parliament in the country, and he was bound to say that, from his experience of elections, that from whatever political Party candidates might be drawn, their views on this particular question varied only in the degree that they were favourable to those who received these pensions. There was no doubt whatever that since the question had been brought to its present position by the labours of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who took it up long before it was popular, Parliamentary candidates invariably introduced into their speeches and addresses old age pensions, and told the working classes that it was the one thing they would endeavour to secure. The labouring poor had become very impatient; and they did not understand the Parliamentary etiquette which compelled the question to be shelved because a Royal Commission was sitting. If when the question was brought before the House it was postponed with the consent of his hon. Friend, his hon. Friend would be blamed. He was far from binding himself to all the details of the Bill. It would be easy to improve it by alteration and elimination. But were hon. Gentlemen opposite, when in opposition, restrained from pressing Bills and forcing them to Divisions by the fact that they were immature and unfit for acceptance? How often was the late Conservative Government attacked because they could not accept a Bill which was unripe for consideration or improperly drawn! Hon.

Members then argued, "This is a splendid principle; affirm that; and then, if you like, alter every word of the Bill." The present Bill was the result of the most careful consideration, as was shown by the speech of the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), who had devoted his life to the subject. Much was fit for acceptance, and as to the authority to administer the provision, and the incidence of the cost, these questions could be settled at a subsequent stage. Because those details were objectionable in the Bill as it stood it was not necessary that its consideration should be indefinitely postponed. If the Report of the Commission would be in the hands of Members within a month, he should, but with great reluctance, advise the postponement of the Bill. But if the Bill were now postponed without any conditions, it would undoubtedly be lost for the present Session—probably for next Session, and in all probability until some other private Member was able to obtain the same good fortune his hon. Friend had got to-day. That being the case, would his hon. Friend be justified in assenting to an adjournment unless it was clearly explained that adjournment was to be subject to a limited time; that it was to be in the hope that the Royal Commission might present its Report within that period of time, and subject to the condition that the Government should give a day to the adjourned Debate on the Bill of his hon. and gallant Friend? That would not throw any difficulty in the way of discussing the Report, which could be discussed on the adjourned Debate of the Second Reading of the Bill. The Report could be presented either for or against the Bill, and if the Report supported the principle of the Bill so much the better for his hon. Friend. He did not wish to add to the difficulties of the Government in dealing with this question; he did not want to suggest they were not absolutely sincere in the statement they had made to-day; but he could not forget that when they were in Office hon. Members who were now sitting opposite seemed to revel in pressing Motions of this character to a Division at improper times; and since then hon. Members opposite had not forgotten to remind the

country that those Divisions and Debates had taken place. Therefore he thought they were entitled, if they thought fit, to press on the Government that they should show their sincerity by giving a vote to-day. They did not wish to make any suggestion of the kind: all they said was, that they had got—through their own energy and not that of the Government, through the good fortune that had overtaken one of their own Members, and not one of the supporters of the Government—they had got a position enabling the Bill to be in an important position to-day; and if it was to be adjourned, it could only be on the understanding that the Government would afford an opportunity for reconsideration within a reasonable time, and that it should be for the consideration of the Bill and not merely the Report of the Committee. If the Government made it clear that was their object, he would be inclined to advise his hon. and gallant Friend to accept the offer; and, if not, his hon. and gallant Friend should ask that the decision of the House should be taken.

SIR W. HARCOURT: By the indulgence of the House I may say one word in regard to what the hon. Member for the West Derby Division of Liverpool (Mr. Long) asks for. What the hon. Gentleman is pressing for is precisely the thing that the President of the Local Government Board has offered. [*Cries of "No!"*] I understand that the day to be given shall be given to the discussion of this particular Bill. The hon. Member fears that he and his hon. Friends might be deprived of the patent right in this Bill. We have no objection to that proposal. I understood that the general discussion of the subject was in deference to the opinions of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). If it is desired that the discussion should be confined to this particular Bill, I have no objection. But this is far too grave a question to make it simply the subject of a complimentary Second Reading. I cannot agree that the question of who is to pay is a secondary question. But if it is desired that the day which the Government are prepared to give should

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be given to this particular Bill, we have no objection at all.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, he could not help expressing his regret at the tone that had been adopted by the hon. Member for the West Derby Division. It was most amusing to find hon. Gentlemen opposite claiming a monopoly of interest in this question, which he was the first to press upon the attention of Parliament. But he should be perfectly willing to give them credit for all possible patent rights if only they would do what he thought they were now willing to do—namely, the work that was required to be done. He had read the Bill carefully, but he could not discover what its principle was. If its principle was that the workhouse was not a fit place for the hard-working man to end his days, that principle could not be separated from the details of its application. After the challenge which had been thrown out, he must express his opinion of the Bill. While he agreed with its object, and to a large extent with the lines on which it was drawn, he believed that it was so badly-conceived and ill-drafted that it would be perfectly idle to consider it in Committee. There was no reason why the House should not have an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon the subject of old age pensions at the proper time. He thought that the offer of the Government entirely met the case, because when hon. Members read the Report of the Commission which had sat to consider the subject, they would find that the discussion of that day had merely touched the fringe of the subject. The Bill now under consideration would enormously increase the burden upon the ratepayers, and, in his opinion, when the Report of the Commission was before them the House would find some other means whereby the object of the present measure might be accomplished at far less cost. He therefore begged to move the Adjournment of the Debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. Hunter.)*

SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) said, he wished to point out one incon-

venience that would result if the Motion for the Adjournment were carried. The object of the Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate was that the subject should be more fully discussed after the Report of the Royal Commission had been presented. But, unless the House accepted the proposal to read the Bill a second time upon that occasion, they would be deprived of the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and others who had spoken on this Bill on the subject of old age pensions. If, however, the House were to accept the Second Reading now, there would be no restriction upon hon. Gentlemen. If the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were adopted, everyone who had spoken to-day would be excluded.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It is not my suggestion.

SIR H. JAMES said, the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman was that the question should be adjourned until the Report of the Royal Commission was presented. If that was not the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, then he must be asking them to reject the Bill. The position of the right hon. Gentleman was either to take the Second Reading or reject it. He was not going into detail, but merely wanted to point out that if the adjournment took place it would be impossible for them to discuss the matter.

COLONEL DAMPIER PALMER said, that those who supported the measure having the opportunity of taking the opinion of the House upon the subject of old age pensions were not going to relinquish it. With regard to the offer of the Government to give a day for the resumption of the discussion on the subject after the Report of the Royal Commission had been presented, they had no idea when that Report would be laid before the House. In his view, the Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate was a dilatory one. The question had been thoroughly discussed at the last General Election, and every hon. Member was pledged to do his best to promote some such measure as this. They

had better divide upon the question of the Adjournment at once, so that they might, before half-past 5 o'clock, have an opportunity of dividing on the Main Question.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland Wansbeck) said, he wished to take this opportunity of appealing to his friends, and those with whom he had any influence, to reject the Second Reading of the Bill. They had had the wonderful spectacle in the Debate this afternoon—

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Debate is now confined to reasons for or against the Adjournment.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) could not quite agree with the hon. Member who had said this was an opportunity of deciding on the question of old age pensions, because the question was what pensions, and how they were to be given? On the Adjournment he wished it to be clearly understood that those who might vote for the Adjournment of this Bill were in no sense whatever to be classed as persons opposed to old age pensions.

*MR. BARTLEY said, that on the Question of the Adjournment he should like to give a strong reason against it. He had had charge of this Bill for four years, having drafted it four years ago, and having balloted every year to bring it on, and since then they had had a General Election, when almost everyone had announced his intention to support some sort of old age pension scheme. If they waited now they might not get another chance for many years, because it was clear to those who understood the Rules of the House that an Adjournment could come to nothing. Supposing the Report of the Royal Commission was issued in a month, it would take another month to consider it, so that they would really lose all the benefit they had got out of their position to-day; therefore they must vote on the question. Though it was a vote on the Adjournment, it amounted to a vote upon the principle of the Bill.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that when the House was unani-

mously agreed with regard to the principle of a measure, the usual course was to read the Bill a second time, and to discuss its details on its subsequent stages. The House was asked to wait for a Report which might never be presented. It was all nonsense for hon. Members to pretend that the vote upon the Question of the Adjournment of the Debate was not a vote upon the principle of the Bill. He hoped the Motion for Adjournment would be resisted.

MR. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.) appealed to the Government to allow the House to come to a decision upon the principle instead of taking a fruitless Division upon the Question of the Adjournment of the Debate. The Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate had been made simply and solely with the view of shelving the whole question. The consideration of the principle of the Bill would be greatly facilitated by the measure being read a second time now, because it could then be referred to a Select Committee, who would consider it in connection with the Report of the Royal Commission when it was presented.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (MR. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) said, he should like to make one remark of a practically historical character as to the reasons that would lead the Government to vote for an Adjournment now. It would be in the memory of most hon. Members that his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board made an offer as to the Adjournment of the Debate which was thought somewhat too limited. The Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) then followed, and indicated that he would take it as a satisfactory arrangement if the Government agreed to an Adjournment of this question at the present time, provided they would offer a day either for the discussion of the whole question or the discussion of this Bill after the Report of the Royal Commission was presented. He hoped he was not incorrect in making that statement. The right hon. Gentle-

man, who was the most important Member of the Royal Commission which was dealing with this question, and who was so well known throughout the country in connection with the subject of old age pensions, suggested that a day should be given by the Government for the resumption of the discussion after the Report of the Commission was presented. That suggestion was accepted, and they were going to act upon that agreement.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 205 ; Noes 136.—(Division List, No. 13.)

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

PATENT AGENTS BILL.—(No. 18.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (London) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, the object of which, he explained, was to amend the law respecting the registration of patent agents and to provide for the appointment of a Council, elected by the whole body of registered patent agents, to make bye-laws for them, keep the Register, and receive the registration fees. A similar Act, which was passed in 1888, ordered that no persons should describe themselves as patent agents without being registered, but he was given to understand that that Act had been evaded by gentlemen who had not described themselves as patent agents but who had acted as such, and he understood a decision had been obtained that they were entitled to do so. At present, under the Act of 1888, the Register was kept by the Institute of Patent Agents, who were a very respectable body of gentlemen, high up in their professional calling, but they were only 60, and there were 241 patent agents, so they could not represent the whole body. It was proposed that the Council should be elected by the whole body of patent agents, and that the Council should receive the fees which should be for the profit of all patent agents and not, as at present, for the small body belonging to the Institute. That Insti-

tute had received a Royal Charter and had made bye-laws which, however, had not obtained the assent of the Privy Council, and were, therefore, practically nugatory. The new Council would obtain power subject to proper assent being given to them to make bye-laws. He understood the hon. Member for Monmouthshire had brought in another Patent Agents Bill, and he should be happy to assent to that being referred to the same Select Committee as this Bill. He understood the President of the Board of Trade would offer no objection to the Second Reading of this Bill provided it was referred to a Select Committee, and for his part he should be happy to consent to such reference.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Alban Gibbs.*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) said, he should not object to the Second Reading of this Bill provided the hon. Gentleman fulfilled the engagement he had just entered into with the House that this Bill, and the one about to be submitted by the hon. Member for Monmouthshire were both sent to the same Select Committee for the purpose of investigation. He could not accept this Bill as it stood, but he did not want to enter into any criticism upon it, because he thought the whole question must be thoroughly investigated by the Committee upstairs. No doubt under the Act of 1888 Rules and bye-laws were laid down, which had proved a source of embarrassment and litigation, and it was desirable that the whole question should be thoroughly investigated. He should assent to the Second Reading on the understanding that this and the other Bill were then referred to a Select Committee.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee) said, if it had not been for the very late period of the Sitting at which the hon. Member had had an opportunity of introducing this Bill he should certainly have complained of the inadequacy of his statement respecting it, and he should, under other

circumstances, also have opposed the Second Reading. It seemed to him that there were points in it seriously objectionable to two important classes—namely, the poor inventors, and those who had been practising as patent agents, and whose interests were seriously affected by the Bill. However, he agreed with the President of the Board of Trade that these matters could be more thoroughly discussed and decided in Committee, and on the understanding that had been entered into he should not oppose the Bill, but should take an opportunity of raising his objections in Committee.

SIR R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, that anyone who had a personal acquaintance with this matter would be of opinion that some legislation was necessary. The Rules made under the Act of 1888 worked very well to a certain extent, but it was found necessary that there should be some means of charging fees, and at present it was doubtful whether these fees could be legally charged. He must say it was impossible for anybody to assent to the Second Reading of this Bill without a clear understanding that the whole matter should be considered by a Select Committee, unfettered by any expression of opinion with respect to the *status* of the existing patent agents and the Institute of Patent Agents, who had done most useful work. It required very careful consideration whether any second body should be allowed to be set up, and whether the proper course would not be to modify the Regulations which at present affected the Institute of Patent Agents so that justice might be done to all parties. He should not have supported the Bill but for the statement that this and the other kindred measure should be referred to a Select Committee with an absolutely free hand, so that the Committee might do what they considered the best in the circumstances.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.) said, he accepted the offer of the hon. Gentleman opposite with regard to referring his (Mr. Warmington's) Bill, together with that of the hon. Gentle-

man, to a Select Committee. He did not want the House to be fettered, and he desired that the Select Committee should have the freest possible powers in dealing with these measures.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) objected to the Bill to some extent, and although he should not, under the circumstances, object to the Second Reading, it must be clearly understood that in taking this course he did not vote for anything beyond this—that after the Second Reading this, together with the other Bill, should be referred to a Select Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee.

MUSIC AND DANCING LICENCES (MIDDLESEX) BILL.—(No. 26.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham) moved that the Bill be read a second time. He explained that the Bill was of a non-contentious character, and its object was to place Middlesex in the same position with regard to the granting of these licences as other districts outside a radius of 20 miles from London. Under the law as it at present stood the County Council could not give licences except at the annual meeting in November, which very often led to considerable inconvenience. The Bill proposed to incorporate the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1890, Part IV., and to apply them to Middlesex. Under these provisions licences could be granted at any time, the only alteration being that in Middlesex the Licensing Authority was the County Council, whilst in the districts 20 miles outside London it was the Justices. It was proposed by the Bill to continue the County Council of Middlesex as the Licensing Authority. The passing of this measure would be a great convenience to the Licensing Committee of the County Council, and would facilitate very much the administration

of the law. He therefore begged to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Howard.*)

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.) said, there was no objection on the part of the Home Office to this Bill, which would be a salutary addition to the disciplinary powers of the Middlesex County Council.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday next.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 44.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR R. WEBSTER moved the Second Reading of this Bill, which he said had been printed and circulated for two Sessions. It was, practically speaking, an extension of the law passed with so much benefit to little children some three or four years ago, and its main object was to remove certain doubts which had arisen, to extend the age in the case of boys from 14 to 16, to enable fresh remedial measures to be taken in cases where there had been actual assaults on children, and to enable the Secretary of State to sanction the emigration of children whom it was desired to place under the care of persons willing to take charge of them. The Bill was certainly not a Party question, and he trusted the House would accord it a Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir R. Webster.*)

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.) said, he fully sympathised with the objects of the Bill, but as it was proposed to extend it to Scotland, he must point out that a good deal of adaptation would be necessary for that purpose.

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL said, that although the Home Office did not object to the Second Reading of the Bill, the Home Secretary reserved to himself discretion to introduce certain Amendments hereafter.

MR. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton) said, he could assure the House that it was with a proper spirit of his responsibility that he opposed the Second Reading of this Bill. His object was not to delay but to secure that a measure of this sort should be brought in and carried through by the responsible Government, and not be submitted, as it was during the last Session night after night, on the chance of slipping through a number of Amendments at a late hour of the night. This Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, and if it were he would be glad to serve on that Committee, and thus to bring the measure within the range of practical legislation. He did not deny that they had an Act of Parliament which had done considerable good, but, on the other hand, there had been grave exaggeration and a great deal of sensational dealing with it, and the danger was that the law was now being intensified in a manner that should not be. All this required a proper check on the part of the Executive, and unless he had a definite assurance in that direction, he should certainly, up to the latest hour he could, prevent this Bill from passing the Second Reading. He did not wish to talk it out, and if the understanding be given to him that the Bill should be properly watched in every stage on the part of the Government he should withdraw his opposition.

MR. MUNDELLA signifying assent,

MR. HOPWOOD withdrew his objection.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL MEAT (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 45.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. A. C. MORTON said, it was impossible for him to allow the Bill to be read a second time when they had less than two minutes in which to consider it. It had protection written all over it, and he was told it would be quite impossible to carry out its provisions in London, and in that case it would deceive consumers, besides which there were other objections.

It being half-past Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

POLICE (METROPOLIS) BILL

(No. 78).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Objection being taken.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday, 6th June.

MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, if it is right to put down a Bill for Second Reading which has not been printed?

*MR. SPEAKER: It is for the House to judge of this question in view of the circumstances under which it is put down.

MOTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 4) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the urban sanitary district of Lisburn, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 140.]

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT (1875), &C., AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles Cameron, Bill to amend "The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," and "The Margarine Act," 1887, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. Frederick Frye, Mr. Kearley, Dr. Farquharson, and Mr. Channing.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 141.]

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT (COUNTY OF BUTE) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles Cameron, Bill to extend to the county of Bute the provisions of

"The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," and any Acts amending the same, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Cameron, Dr. Clark, Sir Leonard Lyell, Mr. Weir, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Mr. Beith, and Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 142.]

PATENT AGENTS REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Warrington, Bill to provide for the Registration of Patent Agents, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Warrington, Mr. David Thomas, and Mr. Bryne.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 143.]

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

First Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

CLOSURE OF DEBATE (STANDING ORDER, 25).

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House:—Return relative thereto (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 313, of Session 1892) [ordered 17th August 1893; *Mr. J. E. Ellis*]; to be printed. [No. 57.]

AMERICAN MAIL SERVICE.

Return ordered, "showing the number of days, hours, and minutes occupied in the transit of Her Majesty's Mails, both outward and inward, carried during the year 1893 by steamships between Queens-town and New York, and also between Southampton and New York; the Return to specify the names of the steamers, and to indicate by asterisks or otherwise those not carrying the Mails under contract (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 170, of Session 1893)."—(*Sir J. Leng*.)

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

SUSPENSION OF THE TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I wish to mention to the House that we propose to move to-morrow the suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule, with the view of concluding the Debate on the proposal for a Scottish Grand Committee.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 5th April 1894.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

EAST LONDON WATER BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Dr. Farquharson*.)

*MR. J. STUART (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) said, he proposed to move as an Amendment that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. He would do it as briefly as he could. This Bill was identically the same as was rejected by the House on the Second Reading 12 months ago, and the reasons for its rejection on that occasion by a substantial majority were twofold: First, that it was unnecessary and not urgent; and, secondly, that it tended to prejudge the question of the future water supply of London. On the present occasion these arguments applied with intensified force, because the Royal Commission which had sat on the London Water Supply question had reported—and in their Report would be found abundant proof—that this Water Company had not only an adequate supply of water for the present and for many years to come, but was actually able to supply its present needs subject to the conditions which were proposed to be imposed upon it by the Royal Commission. It would be for him to make these statements good, and he was able to do so by referring to the evidence as well as to the Report. If the House passed this Bill the effect would be to saddle the future Water Authority of London and the neighbourhood, and that meant practically the ratepayers, with a very large amount of

capital which really was not required, as he would be able to show to the House, in the event of the water supply of London in the future being taken not from the Lea and from the Thames, but from outside sources. This was a very serious question. Already a very considerable amount of capital had been expended on the development of the water supply from the Lea and the Thames. The London County Council, in opposing this Bill, was not seeking to decide against the supply being taken from those sources, for he would remind the House that the Royal Commission had stated that, under certain circumstances with respect to storage and purification, the Thames and the Lea together were sufficient to provide a sufficient water supply for any probable extension of population. That might be so or not, but it was simply a contribution to the main question which would have to be settled before they could come to a decision as to in what form the London water supply was in the future to be secured. The Royal Commission was called upon to decide first whether the areas of the Thames and Lea Valleys were sufficient, and it was only in event of their coming to the conclusion that they were insufficient that they were to go into the question of other sources of supply. But, as a matter of fact, they came to the conclusion that the areas would be sufficient for all practical purposes. Although the London County Council did not, by opposing this Bill at the present moment, seek to prejudge the question, he felt that that body would fall exceedingly far short in its duty if it allowed any steps to be taken which would ignore the natural desire of the people of London to have outside sources of supply. The interests of the London County Council, and of London generally, were as a matter of fact identical with the interests of the inhabitants of Essex, Middlesex, and neighbouring counties. When this Bill was before the House on a previous occasion a member of the Essex County Council, the member who in this House represented North Somerset, spoke very strongly in regard to the matter. What was the position as it then stood? There was no doubt a clause in the Bill as originally brought in respecting the fittings of the Water Company, but the clause had been withdrawn by the Com-

pany. They indicated their intention to withdraw it before the Bill came on for discussion on the Second Reading. The London County Council were not taking this step in their own interest as against the interests of Essex or against any other county. All they desired was to oppose the granting of unnecessary capital to the Companies which the Water Authorities for various districts would have eventually, with the consent of the House, to acquire. They objected to giving them capital for undertakings which were not at this moment urgent, and which would prejudice the great question likely to arise in the immediate future. There was a point in connection with the Bill which had nothing to do with the important question of supply. He referred to the question of mains, and he would state at once to hon. Gentlemen who supported the Bill that if they desired to have new mains laid down in order to supply their districts, and if they could show before a Committee of this House that it was desirable to have those mains, then if the Bill were, as he hoped it would be, thrown out, and if those who represented the East London Company chose to introduce a Bill dealing with the question of mains they would find no opposition raised, and on the contrary every assistance afforded them in the direction of the suspension of Standing Orders, so that they might carry that particular portion of their scheme to a Committee. But the amount of additional capital proposed to be raised under this Bill was £500,000, of which only about £20,000 annually for seven years was asked for for mains and similar purposes. He proposed now to deal with the argument contained in the statement sent out by the promoters of the Bill. The first thing to which he had to draw attention was the statement in Clause 5, that unless they obtained the powers they were now seeking the new districts which were being developed would, for an indefinite period, run a serious risk in sanitary matters by reason of the insufficiency of the water supply. That he ventured to flatly deny, and he hoped he would be able to prove to the House that this was a misapprehension of the existing state of things. He asserted that not only had the East London Company water enough to supply all their mains, but that it had

been proved by their own witnesses before the Royal Commission that the supply was ample. The promoters asserted that if these new populations which were growing up were to be supplied with wholesome water, new mains and pipes would have to be at once laid down in the new districts, large reservoirs would have to be established, and the necessary machinery fixed. He repeated, as to new mains and pipes, that was a very small matter indeed, and again he offered if hon. Gentlemen opposite would withdraw the rest of the Bill, he, on the part of the London County Council, would offer no objection to that portion of the scheme receiving legislative sanction, providing, of course, that the investigation of a Committee of the House proved the existence of the necessity for these extensions. But the Bill generally involved a very important question—namely, the water supply of London for the next 40 years, and this was a matter which he ventured to suggest was fit to be decided not by a Committee of the House, but by the House itself. What he hoped he would be able to show hon. Members was that the question of the sufficiency of the sources of supply from the Lea and the Thames was not one of which it was necessary to come to any decision at the present time. According to the evidence given by the promoters of the Bill before the Royal Commission, the East London Company were at present supplying an average of 40,000,000 gallons daily, and the engineer to the Company stated that whereas that was, at the time he was giving his evidence, the present requirement of the Company, five years hence it would be necessary to supply 42,000,000 gallons daily, and 10 years hence—namely, in 1901, the quantity required would be 44,000,000 gallons. Thus in 10 years there would be an increase of 10 per cent. in the requirements of the Company. These statements by the engineer were subjected to a close examination, as would be found on reference to the evidence. Now, he ventured to suggest, there was nothing alarming in the growth which the officials of the Company estimated would have to be provided for. The Company at present supplied 40,000,000 gallons daily; 10 years hence they would be required to supply 44,000,000. But what was the

amount of water the Company was able, if necessary, to supply? In the first place, they admitted that they had supplied, and could supply, 37,000,000 gallons per day from the River Lea. They also admitted that they had consecutively for weeks supplied from the River Thames 10,000,000 gallons per day, and they further admitted in their evidence that for weeks successively on different occasions they had supplied from their own wells 7,000,000 gallons per day. These statements were contained in evidence given in 1892, and they showed that the Company had the absolute power of supplying from these different sources 54,000,000 gallons daily without finding it necessary to make any additional provision. That being so, and their sources of supply being so much in excess of what they estimated would be their daily requirements 10 years hence, he did venture to submit to the House that it was undesirable by passing this Bill to prejudge the whole question of the future supply of London, and he thought he had made it quite clear that the Bill did prejudge that question, because all the Company had to do to get what they required was to use the powers which they at present possessed of pumping from their wells and of taking water from the Thames. The Royal Commission had reported that the Company ought not to take more than 30,000,000 gallons of water daily from the Lea, and they had suggested that increased storage accommodation was desirable. The promoters stated that the storage works which the Bill proposed to authorise were being provided on the recommendation of the Royal Commission and were immediately necessary; but that was not a fair statement of the case; and if the Company would take its full supply from the Thames and the wells, which amounted to 17,000,000 gallons, they need not abstract more than 27,000,000 gallons from the Lea, and even then they would have an absolutely sufficient supply for the next 10 years. Besides the water capacity they had, they had the power of inter-sale between the various Companies that existed, and they could increase the quantity of water they could get from the Thames to an almost indefinite extent by the exercise of that power. There was accessible to the East London Water Company an

amount of 10,000,000 gallons more than their immediate requirements without any extra capital being laid out, and it might proceed to supply all its needs for the next 10 years, and yet diminish very considerably its supply from the Lea. Again, it was quite obvious that greater storage capacity was not required by the Company. Its storage was the largest, with one exception, of any Company in London. It had storage capacity for 910,000,000 gallons, equal to 14 or 15 days' supply, whereas the average storage was something like six days' supply. There was only one other point he wished to put to the House respecting Clause 3, and it related to machinery. It might be said that the Company required further machinery, but the evidence given before the Royal Commission showed very clearly that they had abundant engine supplies. In the Report of the Royal Commission, in Questions 660 and 661, there was a statement of the enormous amount of machinery possessed by the Company for pumping purposes, and it appeared that they had more than 50 per cent. of stand-by or surplus power in all of their different districts. The Chairman of the Commission asked—

"We may take it that your present machinery is modern high-class machinery doing good duty?"

To which the reply was—

"Splendid duty. All our new engines are triple expansion engines."

So much for the points in respect of the third clause of the statement of the promoters. He would turn to one other point. It was stated in the evidence before the Commission itself that the reservoirs proposed in this Bill were not to provide water for what was needed now, but for very distant and future requirements. The engineer and secretary to the Company had laid before the Royal Commission a statement as to what the Company could supply, and how it could meet all present and prospective needs. They were summoned back to deal with the point of additional provisional supply, because the Commission felt it would still investigate how the additional supply could be provided, and that additional supply was what was referred to in this

Bill. Here was what passed on this subject before the Royal Commission—

“The Chairman: You have already taken, I think, about 37,000,000 gallons daily from the Lea?—Yes.

“Then do you think if you raise the race-course reservoir and make the two projected reservoirs”

—that was what was proposed to be done by this Bill—

“you can get 40,000,000 gallons a day without making the new compensation reservoirs?—Speaking from my experience at the present time we can do so.”

It would be seen, therefore, that the provision of these reservoirs which were proposed in this Bill was to make arrangements for the supply of 40,000,000 gallons in place of 30,000,000, but he had shown that by even a much less amount than 30,000,000 gallons daily taken from the River Lea—although they were taking much more than that—the East London Company could supply all that was required. It was necessary for those who opposed the Bill to show how very dangerous and doubtful were the sources of supply from which the East London Water Company proposed to take this extra quantity, because if it was no matter where the supply came from, they might as well let them take it from there as elsewhere. The Royal Commission reported as follows about the supplies from the Thames and the Lea, which were proposed to be taken for the next 40 years by the Company:—

“Having regard to the experience of London during the last 30 years and to the evidence given on the subject, we do not believe that any danger exists of the spread of disease by the use of this water provided there is no adequate storage, and that the water is sufficiently filtered before being delivered to consumers.”

It was exactly that adequate storage and the additional filterage which required the expenditure of very large sums of money. But what did the Royal Commissioners themselves say on the subject? Mr. Mansergh himself, one of the Royal Commissioners, was examined before a Royal Commission of this House on behalf of the Birmingham Corporation, and on that occasion he said that any river flowing through an enormous tract of agricultural country must produce water which nowadays they would not think of supplying. He knew (said Mr. Mansergh) that many districts would

not have water from such a source; and he knew of places which had had to abandon costly works simply because of the water procurable from such a source being gradually polluted, and they did not want to repeat that in Birmingham. It was because they did not want to repeat that in London, and at any rate because they did not want to be forced into repeating it unnecessarily, that he raised opposition to the Bill at the present moment, and the House would see that there were many considerations about the supply from the Lea and the Thames. The Commission did not investigate any other supplies; they did not bring out what would be the relative expenses of supplying London from these and from external sources. They who opposed this Bill believed the Company would supply inferior water from the Thames and the Lea at a much greater cost than would be entailed by bringing water from external districts. They had also the important question of the impurity of the water from an agricultural district to take into account, and, on these grounds, they opposed the Bill being read a second time, because, as he had shown, it unnecessarily endeavoured to prejudge the question. The London County Council was perfectly willing to make overtures for itself becoming the Water Authority. It had got these powers under the Act of 1892; it was willing to take this responsibility itself, and it had offered by resolution passed some time ago to treat with the Water Companies for taking over their undertakings on fair and reasonable terms. It had applied to this very Company, and to the other Company which had a Bill down, and they had refused to negotiate with the Council. [“No, no!”] Well, they did not accept the basis of negotiations which the County Council proposed, but they made no counter proposal. The County Council had passed a further resolution to the effect that, if the Company would not come to terms, the Council ought to move this House to determine the question. He might appeal confidently to Members on both sides of the House who represented great Municipalities to say that it was a fair and right thing for the County Council to endeavour to acquire these various Companies; but they did not want to acquire them with a dead limb of capital attached to them at this

moment, when it was unnecessary, and which prejudged the question of whether they were going to get their supply through them or through other sources. Even if the County Council did not become the Water Authority, the body which did become such authority ought to be able to decide where the future supplies ought to come from; and even if it came from the valley of the Thames and Lea, it did not at all stand to reason that the first step in the undertaking should be more capital expended on a reservoir for the Lea when they considered the circumstances of the Thames. He contended that this Bill was absolutely unnecessary from the point of the supply of the quantity or quality of water, because it had been shown before the Royal Commission that there was ability in this Company to get vastly more than it required for the next 10 years from sources which the Royal Commission approved of, and which needed no further expenditure for works. The expenditure proposed by this Bill on reservoirs, filters, and pumping, was an expenditure for a far distant period, which should be incurred only if they required to get a supply for 40 years, or for a very long period of time, from the Lea. The other districts of London, Essex, and the borders of the London County Council district, were equally interested with the London County Council in securing that there should not be this dead limit of capital attached. This was a matter of vital importance to the health of the people of London and the surrounding neighbourhoods, and he asked this House to defend them against such a prejudging of this question as would take place if the present Bill be sent up to a Committee at the present time. If the Bill were thrown out—as he hoped it might be—he and his friends had no objection to its being brought up again so far as it related to the provision of mains, but they could not allow the Bill to prejudge the all-important question of where the London water supplies were to come from. He begged to move “That the Bill be read a second time upon this day six months.”

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word “now,” and at the end of the Question to add the words “upon this day six months.”—(*Mr. J. Stuart.*)

Question proposed, “That the word ‘now’ stand part of the Question.”

***MR. BOULNOIS** (Marylebone, E.) did not propose to follow the hon. Member for Hoxton in the details which he had presented to the House upon this Bill, and indeed he looked upon the hon. Gentleman positively as an advocate for reading the Bill a second time and sending it to a Committee, because it was clearly evident to the House that it was quite impossible they could master the details which the hon. Member had put before them, and which were essentially matters for the ordinary Committee of this House to deal with. There were one or two principles involved in this question which he must shortly place before the House. Of course, it was quite impossible upon this occasion to dissociate the two Companies whose Bills were before the House to-day, because the statement issued by the London County Council not only classed these two Bills together, but went so far as to include a third, which was not even down for Second Reading. The position of these Water Companies applying now to Parliament for further capital and an extension of powers was shortly this: They had come to the end of their tether as far as money was concerned, and if they were to fulfil their statutory obligations to supply water they must have more money, because to supply the water they must have more reservoirs and more filtering power. Last year this Company applied to Parliament for further powers, the Bill being thrown out on the Second Reading, and the main reason then given by the hon. Member for Hoxton, who led the attack, was that there was a Royal Commission sitting, and it was quite premature for the Water Company to ask for further powers until such Commission had reported. That argument could no longer be urged. The Royal Commission had reported favourably as far as the London water was concerned, and it was, indeed, entirely in consequence of the Report of the Royal Commission that these Water Companies sought further powers. The House would permit him to read one paragraph from the Report of the Royal Commission, which was perhaps the most important in the whole Report.

The Commissioners stated they were strongly of opinion that the water as supplied to the consumer in London was of a very high standard of excellence and purity, and that it was suitable in quality for all household purposes. The Commissioners further stated that they were aware that a certain prejudice existed against drinking water supplied from the Thames and the Lea, but they did not believe that there was any danger of the spread of disease from the use of such water, provided there was adequate storage for it, and that the water was efficiently filtered before it was delivered to the consumers. It was because of the desire to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, to provide adequate reservoirs and means to filter the water properly, that the Companies now came for further powers. The Water Companies in the last four or five years had been applied to from time to time by the Local Government Board with reference particularly to storage. He held in his hand a letter from the Local Government Board to one of the Water Companies, written at the close of the year 1891, which said—

"I am directed by the Local Government Board to draw the attention of the Company to Dr. Frankland's Report for October, from which it appears evident that the Company are unable to deal satisfactorily with the water when the Thames is in flood, and I am to state that the Metropolitan Water Examiner reports to them that it is now necessary that the Company should consider the question of making such sufficient addition to their works as will enable them to supply water of better quality than is now done when the circumstances are as above stated."

To that the Company promptly replied, pointing out, in reference to the state of the water when the Thames was in flood, that it was due at that time to the exceptionally heavy rains which had been of long duration, and they went on to say—

"The Directors are fully alive to the importance of ample storage, and the desirability of increasing the present reservoir capacity would have been considered before this had it not been for the manner in which the Companies had been hampered by recent proceedings in Parliament. They are, however, quite prepared to entertain the question and to seek powers from the Legislature to raise fresh capital for the purpose, and I am instructed to ask if, on such an application being made, the Directors may hope that it will receive the support of the Local Government Board."

Mr. Boulnois

So much for the Local Government Board and its application to the Water Companies to increase their storage and filter power. What happened at the London County Council in consequence of the Report of the Royal Commission? The subject had been very fully considered by the Water Committee of the London County Council. It was all very well for the Member for Hoxton to say that they wanted more time, but they had already considered and reported on the question very fully. He had with him extracts from the most important Reports which had been made to the London County Council. The first was the statement made by the Chairman of the Water Committee, Mr. Bassett Hopkins, an able gentleman who had taken a great interest in the question, and this was what he said—

"The paramount necessity of acceding to any well-grounded demand for augmented supply may make such a demand irresistible, and in this case the policy of the Council is, while not opposing the demand (within the strict limits of what is required), to prevent its being accompanied by the inconvenience just referred to."

Then there was a short paragraph from the Report of Mr. Binnie, the chief engineer to the London County Council, who was himself a very eminent water engineer, and who clearly was not in favour of the supply of London being drawn from the Thames. Mr. Binnie said—

"Mere opposition"—

and that was what they had to-day—

"Mere opposition to the applications of the Companies by the Council must be followed by certain and ignominious defeat, for the whole drift of the evidence placed before the Royal Commissioners by the witnesses for the Council went to show that London requires more water and extended works; and if the Companies are to continue to perform the duties imposed upon them further powers of some kind must be conferred."

These were strong words, and if the Water Company were to base their case on no other they would be justified in coming to Parliament. Mr. Cripps, the able Parliamentary agent of the London County Council, said—

"... It would have been difficult to resist the contention of the Water Companies, those being the statutory bodies authorised to supply water in London; they ought to be furnished with ample capital powers to meet not only the present, but the prospective, demands upon them. The inquiry before the Royal Com-

mission has now elicited and afforded to the Council probably all the best information available upon this subject. When, therefore, the Council opposes, as I think they should oppose, the large increase of capital, and possibly the new works proposed under the present Bills, it is, I think, obvious that the absence of any definite conclusion as to general policy may render it less easy to justify withholding from the Companies the powers which they are now seeking."

He had quoted these Reports of the officials of the London County Council in order to show that the Council had come to Parliament to oppose these Bills with their eyes wide open and practically against the advice of those responsible to them for giving advice. The London County Council claimed to act for the County of London, and he did not deny them the right to do so, but he did not think they had any mandate to take any part for those outside the County of London—either in the Counties of Essex or Middlesex, both of which counties were touched by these Bills. The West Middlesex Water Company had 27 square miles of mains, $9\frac{1}{2}$ of which only were in the County of London and $17\frac{1}{2}$ outside, and yet the London County Council came down and said not only that the people of London, but the unfortunate people outside the area of London, were to go without water, because that was what it would come to if this Bill were rejected. The London County Council themselves admitted that it would take from 15 to 20 years before they could mature a scheme for what they considered an adequate and proper supply of water for London, and he did not know what might happen in the meantime if the London County Council, year after year, came down to oppose those who, by Act of Parliament, were now the Water Authorities of London—especially if they had such a summer as they had last year—because these works, though authorised by Parliament, could not be undertaken immediately, and could not be carried to fruition without a considerable lapse of time. The hon. Member for Hoxton referred to the fact that the London County Council were in treaty with the Water Companies. It was true that the London County Council made application to the Water Companies to know whether they would come to terms, but they attached such impossible conditions and terms to their application that it was quite im-

possible that the Water Companies could accede to them. In the statement of the London County Council which had been circulated the bold assertion was made that the London County Council applied to the Water Companies to sell their undertakings to the County Council on fair and reasonable terms, but that the Companies had combined together and declined to negotiate. So far as these two Companies before the House were concerned, that statement was absolutely untrue. The Companies had not declined to negotiate, but they had said very properly, as any Water Company directors would do who acted in the interests of their shareholders, that they had a fine property which they did not wish to sell, but that if any proposition were put before them it should receive their best consideration. No proposition of any sort or kind had ever been put before the Water Companies by the London County Council. Until the County Council put their proposal in a definite shape and gave some figures which the Water Companies could deal with it was not likely they would come to terms with the Water Companies, and it was extremely unfair to say they had offered to negotiate, and that the Companies had declined negotiation. He would point out that in these applications which were made for further capital and extended powers the shareholders would derive no benefit whatever. There was only one more point which, though a small one, should not be entirely lost sight of, and that was, that the London County Council were adopting what he might term a selfish and dog-in-the-manger policy in this matter. They themselves would do nothing, and they asked Parliament to prevent the Water Companies doing anything, which was very much on all-fours with their improvement schemes. The County Council then came to Parliament and said they would do nothing in the way of improvements unless they gave them "betterment," and now they said to the Water Companies they would prevent such Companies getting any further powers unless they were willing to sell their undertakings to the Council practically at the price of old iron. That was a selfish policy which, he was sure, would not commend itself to this House. It must be re-

collected that this money which it was proposed to expend would give employment to thousands of working-men of the labouring class during the winter months when employment was difficult to get. He maintained that these Bills ought to go to a Select Committee in the ordinary way, so that the details could be threshed out. The London County Council would have a full opportunity of putting their case before the Committee, and they could ask the Committee to deal with all the questions which had been raised by the hon. Member for Hoxton as to whether the expenditure should be confined to mains, reservoirs, or filter beds, or whether less money should be given to these Companies. It was quite impossible for this House—especially with so much business before it—to enter into details of this kind. Even if the Select Committee upstairs passed this Bill as it was, or with amendment, the London County Council were even then not estopped from coming and asking the House to reject the Bill on the Third Reading. He threw aside altogether the suggestion dropped at the last moment by the hon. Member for Hoxton, that if the Water Companies would bow down to the London County Council and take out the essential part of the Bill and confine their application to mains for new districts, then the Council would not oppose them. He would remind the hon. Member and the House that mains alone were not of any use to a Water Company. They could not turn the water straight from the Thames or the Lea into these mains, and then distribute it to consumers. They must manufacture the water, store it for a reasonable period before use, and then filter it before it passed to the mains for distribution. He asked the House to adopt the usual course of sending these Bills to a Committee upstairs, which was the only tribunal recognised by this House as capable of dealing with such questions.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): It will, perhaps, be to the convenience of the House if I rise somewhat early in this discussion for the purpose of stating what my opinion is as to the course the House should take in regard to the Bill before

us. The Bill is one of three Water Bills which have been promoted by the Water Companies of London for the purpose of providing themselves with capital for the erection of very extensive works to increase the supply of water. The London County Council oppose this Bill on the ground, in the first place, that they have not yet had time fully to consider the Report of the Royal Commission of last year; that they ought to have time fully to consider that Report, with a view to determining what shall be the policy in regard to the future; and, secondly, that they will be prejudiced by the passing of this Bill in their negotiations with the Water Companies. I have carefully considered the subject at the Local Government Board, and I have come to the conclusion that there is a good deal of force in the objection of the London County Council. This Bill is identical with the Bill which was presented last year—["No, no!"]—or almost identical. The Bill was rejected last year on the ground that the Royal Commission was then sitting, and it was not expedient to increase the powers of the Water Companies pending the Report of the Commission. The Commission, no doubt, has reported in the interval, but it only reported at the end of September last, and there was not time after that Report of the Commission was in hand for the London County Council to come to a decision as to what should be done upon it, to frame proposals upon it and give notice to this House in the ordinary course. In these circumstances, it appears to me that the same policy ought to prevail this year as last year, and that this Bill ought not to be proceeded with at the present moment, but that further time ought to be given to the London County Council to deal with the whole subject. The fact is, that the Report of the Royal Commission has made a new position in the matter. The Royal Commission recommended, no doubt, that the Thames and Lea Valley water, with a sufficient storage and adequate provision for filtration, would be suited for many years to come for the supply of London, but they also made some further important recommendations. They recommended that a very large reservoir should be erected in the Thames Valley near to Staines. They recommended that further great

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reservoirs should be made in the Lea Valley; that further inspection powers should be given to the authorities for the purpose of securing that the water supplied by the Companies was properly filtered. A further recommendation of the Royal Commission was that there should be an inspection of all the tributaries of the Thames to secure the water from being polluted. On the other hand, the Royal Commission did not report as to the cost of these works. They did not give any indication as to what it would cost to provide reservoirs, and they did not consider any of the schemes which have been suggested as alternative to those now recommended. The schemes which are before us in the shape of the proposals of the Water Companies are not in accordance with the scheme of the Royal Commission. ["Oh!"] I believe I am fully justified in saying that. The East London Company, no doubt, proposes to make a reservoir in the Lea Valley, but the two other Companies, although they propose to add to the storage works, do not propose to add to them in the manner indicated by the Royal Commission. One would have expected that the Water Companies, after the Report of the Royal Commission, would have combined together for the purpose of propounding a scheme in exact accordance with the Report of the Royal Commission. They have not done so, but they have each come to Parliament with their separate schemes for their own works on their own lines without any joint action with regard to the long future; without making provision for these extensive reservoirs which were contemplated by the Royal Commission, without any method for increasing the extension of their water and for ensuring the purity of the water in the tributaries of the Thames. They have simply proposed to act upon the old lines of each Water Company extending its own works without any joint or combined action and without any reference to the great scheme of the Royal Commission. I think, under these circumstances, it is well worthy the consideration of the House whether these Bills should be proceeded with this year. In my opinion, further time ought to be given for the consideration of the whole subject. There can be no doubt, in my opinion, that if these Bills are passed the position of the Water Companies will be

greatly strengthened. They will be independent of the County Council, and will be in a position to refuse to negotiate with them. ["How?"] Under these circumstances, I think the London County Council are justified in asking for further delay, and the only question is whether that delay will be prejudicial to the interests of the London people. That is no doubt a very serious question, but I cannot bring myself to believe that a delay of one year will make any great difference in this respect. ["Two years!"] I have had some hesitation in coming to a conclusion on this point. But, after all, the London County Council should be the best judge in these matters. They must know the wants of their own people, and it appears to me when a great Municipality like London comes before this House and asks for delay in coming to a conclusion upon a matter so vitally affecting their interests—when they come to this House and ask that they may have another year before a measure of this kind is passed and before further concessions are made to the London Water Companies, they are entitled to the patient and careful hearing of this House, and on the whole I am inclined to advise the House to listen to the demand in that respect of the London County Council and not allow this Bill to be further proceeded with this year. After all, it will amount only to a delay of a single year. In the interval the London County Council will be in a position to make the further inquiries which they contemplate, and for my part, while I advise this course to the House, I think it must be with this reservation: I think we ought to expect that next year the London County Council will come before Parliament with a definite scheme for dealing with this question—with a definite policy and definite scheme which will be elaborated in the interval. On the other hand, I think that the Water Companies ought on their part to take advantage of the interval for the purpose of combining together to produce a joint scheme to carry out the recommendation of the Royal Commission of last year, for the purpose of providing these increased reservoirs for the supply of water for London, and also for the purpose of carrying out all these further recommendations of the Royal Commission for the better securing the purity and im-

proving generally the condition of the water supply of London. It is in this view, and considering that a delay of one year cannot make a serious difference in the supply of water to London, that I am of opinion that the House should follow the same course which it adopted last year, and postpone the consideration of this important and vital question for another year, and not proceed with these three Water Bills in the current year.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I should have been astonished at the course which the Government have taken upon this occasion if anything which the Government does were likely now to cause astonishment. The right hon. Gentleman says that on the whole he is prepared to recommend the House to vote against these two Bills, but there was a certain amount of timidity in the way in which he uttered the sentence, and I am not surprised at it. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to represent a London constituency of consumers of water, and I maintain that they are as much entitled to be heard as either the Water Companies or the London County Council. The right hon. Gentleman speaks as if the matter is one which affects the London County Council alone. But the Chairman of the Essex County Council is imploring the authorities to proceed with this Bill; and is Essex to be starved of water and a dangerous delay to be incurred in order that the London County Council may be given more time to elaborate a scheme for the purchase of the Water Companies? I am not thinking of the Water Companies, but rather of the consumers of water. What is the situation? What evidence does the House possess that this delay is justified? Unless the right hon. Gentleman is prepared with a stronger conviction than he appears to entertain as to the propriety of rejecting this Bill he ought not to run the serious risk of delaying these operations. A year is of enormous importance when works of this kind are to be undertaken, and I protest, on behalf of the Metropolitan consumers of water, against the delay of another year in a matter of this importance. Let it be remembered that the question is not whether the Bills are to be carried or not, but whether they are to be examined or not. If the right hon. Gentle-

man has got a case let it go to the Select Committee. Let them go to a Hybrid Committee, and let the whole matter be examined. The hon. Member for Hoxton, who represents the London County Council, gave us a good deal of detailed information. I wonder whether any one single Member of the House was able to follow the mass of details. It is eminently a question which must be examined by a Select Committee. The Select Committee would examine the question of capital; it would examine the question of whether there is to be a dead limb attached to the purchase by the County Council, as was suggested in picturesque terms by the hon. Member who opposes this Bill. But do hon. Members opposite and does the Government not trust a Committee? This might be not a Committee of Metropolitan Members, not a Committee composed of those acquainted with these matters, but representing probably what might be described as a microcosm, a miniature of the House? Is it not preposterous that a Government which makes speech after speech in favour of devolution should encourage a Debate of this kind, which consumes valuable time, because it fears to have the question relegated for inquiry to a Select Committee? The Government would have saved time if they had accepted this proposition and allowed a Select Committee to deal with the matter. Can we suspect that one of their motives is that a vote of this House will be different to what it will be on the Select Committee, and, at this moment, when we are asked that Scotchmen should be allowed to manage their own affairs, are Scotch and Irish votes to deprive the Metropolis of the power of having their water for another year? I would remind the House that the Chairman of the Select Committee last year appealed to the House that the matter should be referred to a Select Committee, and I think that, even then, neither the Government nor the majority listened to the Chairman of the Select Committee. No, it was to be referred to a Committee upstairs. If we are to be dealt with in this manner, if at the bidding of the County Council—because do not let us disguise the fact that otherwise the Government would have allowed these two Bills to go to a Committee—if this be so, may I ask

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those hon. Members for Scotland who think that Scotchmen ought to manage their own affairs to abstain from taking part in the coming Division, which is on a purely Metropolitan question? By their action we shall see the sincerity of their desire that each locality should manage its own affairs in which they have interest. I make the same appeal to the Welsh Members and to the Irish Members. Let the Metropolis decide this matter for itself, and if it is so allowed I am pretty certain how the Metropolis will decide. The Metropolis will ask for the water supply, and if it cannot get the water, at all events we wish that a Committee of this House should thoroughly inquire into the whole of this matter, and then they would be prepared to accept the verdict of such Committee. The ratepayers are interested on the one hand and the consumers of water on the other. They would have perfect confidence in the ordinary Forms of this House, and these Bills above all others are not Bills which ought to be rejected upon the Second Reading, but which should be read a second time and then referred to Committee.

Mr. J. STEWART WALLACE (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) said, that his constituency considered there was no urgent need in this matter whatever, and their chief reason for so thinking was that the storage supply of this particular Company was almost double that of the average storage of other London Water Companies. Whilst the storage was almost double, the daily supply was over 20 per cent. per head higher than the average of the other Water Companies. His constituents, therefore, said there was no urgency whatever in the matter; and seeing that the Report of the Royal Commission had only been printed so recently the matter should not be pressed further, because no public interest would be endangered or imperilled by the delay. They considered that the time was most inopportune for bringing forward such a Bill, and seeing that the London County Council would probably come to Parliament and ask for powers to enable it to be the Water Authority for London, no possible increase to the charge of the ratepayers should be incurred at present. The case was not of such urgency that the Company should be empowered to raise this additional

capital, seeing that in a comparatively short time the County Council might be seeking to purchase the property. He therefore hoped that the House would oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. He would like, in conclusion, to say a few words in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, who had gone out of his way to introduce much irrelevant matter. The right hon. Gentleman had said that if several parties in the House were sincere in their convictions, they would refrain from voting on this question; and he further declared that if the matter were left to London, there was no doubt what the voice of London would be. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman, Was not the London County Council the voice of London? and the London County Council had in the most unmistakable manner entered their protest against the passing of the Bill.

*MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had stated that he opposed the Second Reading of the Bill on behalf of his constituency. But the Bill would not affect that district. Limehouse was already freely supplied with water by the particular Company in question; and the district that would be affected was a division in Essex which was not under the London County Council at all. The Chairman of the Essex County Council wrote to *The Times* the other day condemning the London County Council opposition to the Bill, and expressing the hope that the Bill would pass. He did not deny the adequacy of the water supply of the East London Water Company; but the Bill was not to increase the source of the supply of water, but to provide additional facilities for distributing the water; it was to increase the storage, the reservoirs, the mains, and the agencies for filtration and pumping. Out of the £500,000, £40,000 were to be expended on the extension of the high service reservoirs; £140,000 on the extension of the mains; £80,000 on the pumping arrangements; £45,000 on the filtration beds; £145,000 on additional reservoirs; and the balance of £50,000 was applicable to the various needs of the Company. The hon. Member for Limehouse had also stated that if

the £500,000 were raised by the Company it would be added to the purchase money in the event of the London County Council buying out the Water Companies. But the hon. Member did not know his case well. He forgot that new works could not be reproductive at once, and that there was a clause in another Act, applicable to this Bill, which compelled the Company to give the profits earned in the debenture issue to the Corporation of London, the Corporation to hold them for the benefit of the consumers, or towards providing funds for purchasing the Company if necessary. The profits did not go to the Company at all, and therefore that argument fell to the ground. The hon. Member for Hoxton also said that the London County Council, when they purchased the Company, would not require those new works, and, as the hon. Member put it, would be purchasing "a dead limb." But if the County Council did purchase the Company, they would have to distribute the water, and they could not distribute the water, from whatever source it was supplied, without mains, or without engines for pumping; they could not depend on a single main, which might burst; and they must have reservoirs to store the water, to take advantage of the rainy seasons, and to guard against drought. He presumed that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Hoxton would not contend that the County Council would give more for two Water Companies than was proposed under the late Mr. Smith's scheme? Very well. The late Mr. Smith, in his proposal for purchase, in 1880, suggested that the debenture-holders of the different Water Companies should receive their income in Stocks of the Purchasing Authority. The Purchasing Authority in this case would be the London County Council. The County Council could raise money at a rate per annum of £2 14s. The East London Water Company could raise money on the Debenture Stock at a rate per annum of 3 per cent. The difference between that amount was 6s. per annum, and that on £500,000 was £1,500 per year, equal to 2d. per annum per house over the whole of the Company's district, or, on 30 years' purchase, capitalised £45,000. That was to say, that in the event of the London County Council purchasing the East London Water Com-

pany's business, they would be buying the actual works which would be created under the powers of this Bill at the actual cost of the works plus 9 per cent., or £45,000 for compulsory purchase. The hon. Member for Hoxton had said the district affected was not increasing. As a matter of fact, its present increase was at the rate of 4,150 houses per annum.

MR. J. STUART: I said the district was not increasing, and I gave the exact figures of the engineers of the Company.

MR. BANBURY said, that the exact figures which the hon. Gentleman gave applied to the whole of the district over which the money was not going to be spent. The money was to be spent on the division in Essex, where the number of houses was increasing at the rate of 4,000 per annum. He hoped the House would pass the Bill—first, because water was one of the first necessities of life, and the Company was bound by its Act of Parliament to supply every house in the district with water; and, secondly, because, if the Company was not permitted to enlarge its works in order to carry out its obligations to Parliament, its stock would be depreciated, and the London County Council would be able to buy out the Company cheaply, which was the real motive at the bottom of this opposition.

MR. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had given away the case with regard to the cry of a water famine, when he said that the proposal of the Bill was not to increase the water supply. If the Bill was not to increase the supply of water—

MR. BANBURY: I said it was not to increase the source of the supply.

MR. BENN said, he must have misheard the hon. Gentleman. But with regard to the question of a water famine, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, complained that the hon. Member for Hoxton had not gone into details with regard to that very important point. The Company in their Report to the Royal Commission made a statement which effectually disposed of the cry of a water famine. They stated that they had made every allowance for a possible increase of supply in their district; and could fur-

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nish water adequate in supply and excellent in quality for a period of 40 years, with a large surplus margin. Nevertheless, it might look like an unreasonable thing for the London County Council to ask the House to throw out the Bill. He would, therefore, ask the House to listen to the story of the London County Council's action in the matter. After the Report of the Royal Commission, the County Council decided to approach the Water Companies in a businesslike way in order to solve the great question of the London water supply. They adopted the following Resolution, which contained the terms on which they were prepared to buy out the Water Companies—

"That negotiations be entered into for the purchase of the undertakings of the Water Companies, or one or more of them, at a fair and reasonable price, on the basis of a desire to purchase and willingness to sell; having regard to any circumstances and statutory provisions affecting the present and prospective position, income, expenditure, liabilities, obligations, and value of the Companies respectively, and their undertakings, including any present and probable future demands for improvements and extensions of works, and new or additional sources of supply, and on the understanding that if satisfactory terms cannot be mutually agreed upon, an application will be made to Parliament to determine in what manner and on what condition a transfer to the Council shall be arranged, provided that no monopoly right on the part of the Water Companies be recognised."

He submitted that that was a very fair basis of negotiations between the London County Council and the Water Companies. He challenged the hon. Member for Peckham to produce the reply of the East London Water Company to that application.

MR. BANBURY: I am ready to reply. The answer is as follows:—

"St. Helen's Place, March 10th, 1894.

"Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, setting out the resolution recently passed by the London County Council which has been fully deliberated upon by the Directors of this Company, and in reply to the question you ask, I am to state that the Directors do not see their way to enter into negotiations for the sale of their undertaking to the London County Council on the basis indicated in the resolution. The Directors, however, desire me to add that if any definite and practicable proposals are made for the purchase of their undertaking, they will be prepared to give them very careful consideration."

MR. BENN said, it must be obvious to the House that the London County Council suggested a counter-proposal

from the Water Company. The County Council definitely and clearly stated their views, and if those views were not thought sufficiently reasonable by the Water Company the Company ought to have consented to the arbitration that was suggested. The London County Council tried to do what other County Councils had successfully done—namely, in making agreements with the Water Companies, which agreements had been subsequently ratified by the House. The London County Council tried to bring the Water Companies to terms, but the Water Companies seemed determined to have nothing to do with the London County Council. Therefore, the London County Council came to the House and asked the House to take the extreme measure of rejecting the Bill of the East London Water Company. The policy of the London County Council was summed up in the words used by Mr. Speaker 15 years ago, when the great question of the London water supply was introduced by the late Mr. Henry Fawcett—

"The supply of such a necessity of life as water should be maintained by a Public Body, and that that Public Body should not be subject to the caprice of commercial considerations, or the requirements of shareholders, &c., and to the fluctuations of policy to which such requirements would lead."

The object of the Bill was to promote a commercial undertaking, to serve the interests of the shareholders, and not to improve the water supply of London. It aimed at enhancing the value of the Company with a view to the ultimate purchase by the London County Council. That was quite a common thing in the experience of the London County Council. If a new street was to be opened, it was wonderful with what facility buildings were added to buildings in order that the compensation might be as large as possible. He wished also to emphasise the point that if the Company were allowed to make this expenditure, and if the County Council afterwards purchased the Water Companies, an amalgamation would, of course, ensue, with the result that many of those works would be useless. In conclusion, he would quote the words uttered in 1879 by the late Mr. Henry Fawcett, who was a citizen of London—

"If you place insuperable difficulties in the way of a great reform being carried out, we

will carry out that reform in spite of you; at any rate, we are determined that the people of London shall not for ever be afflicted with the evils connected with the present system of water supply."

MR. GROVE (West Ham, N.) said that, as the Representative of an East London constituency, he felt bound to support the Second Reading of the Bill. It was with regret he ventured to oppose such a body as the London County Council, for whom he had the most profound respect, inasmuch as he considered they had done for the poor of London, for the dignity of the Metropolis, and even for the beautifying of our great capital, more than any other Public Body, not only in this Kingdom, but throughout the whole of Europe. Therefore, it was with regret that he opposed the London County Council, but he did it now with thoroughness as equal as his reluctance. It was a curious thing that the result of Water Company Bills seemed to turn the stream of popular opinion entirely. The Progressive Party became reactionary, and the Reactionary Party became progressive. The effect of the water was to wash black white—he did not object to that—but it also washed white black very often. He thought the tactics of the London County Council were governed by a bad and harmful principle. They did not come forward and say resolutely that they would not have this Bill. They first said that when the Royal Commission had terminated they would deal with the question of purchase. But the Royal Commission had now reported that we had got no "forrider" with the London County Council. They still delayed. He appealed to the common sense of the House, were his constituents to go thirsty because the London County Council could not make up its mind? Were his constituents also to go dirty? This was the second year of a great drought, and if there was a continuation of droughts, which was not at all unlikely, there would be a great danger to the health of his constituency, which numbered nearly 224,000 people, if the supply of water was not adequate and ample. They had heard a great deal of theory from the London County Council. Let him give one ounce of practice. As the Representative of the constituency, West Ham, North, he frequently heard not only from the traders and manufacturers that the supply of water was not

sufficient to carry on trade and business but he heard from the poor, whom he was proud to represent, that they were also in danger of being starved. He thought that statement of fact ought to go a long way against the arguments of the London County Council. He was glad to see that the introduction of the Bill had had a good effect. It had made the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, a thorough Home Ruler. He would point out also that West Ham was outside the area of the London County Council. They should not presume to dictate to the London County Council, controlled as it was by eminent men—*[A laugh]*—he spoke seriously—if the London County Council confined themselves to the area of their own jurisdiction. What right had the London County Council to go to a place like Essex, and to West Ham, North and South, and say, "We shall manage your water affairs as well as the water affairs of the Metropolis?" Let the London County Council manage their own affairs in the Metropolis as brilliantly and ably as in the past, but let them not interfere in the concerns of areas over which they had no jurisdiction. He would put it to hon. Members from the Sister Island, who may possibly cast their vote against the East London Water Company, how would they like it if the London County Council went to Dublin and said, "We shall manage your water affairs in such and such a way"? That was the case of the people of West Ham, and they insisted that they should have the right to manage their own affairs unintruded upon by the London County Council. It was because he looked upon the action of the London County Council as an unjust usurpation that he supported the Bill. He spoke entirely in the interest of his constituents, numbering 224,000, and not in the interest of the East London Water Company. In fact, if the Bill were read a second time, he intended, if in Order, to move as an Instruction to the Committee that in the event of the purchase of the Water Company by the London County Council—which he hoped would come to pass—the shares now issued should be purchased at par and not at an increased value. That would remove many of the objections which the London County Council had brought

forward. He felt it to be a matter of importance that a Company which might possibly be purchased on behalf of the people should not be overloaded with capital; but because he also felt that the London County Council was encroaching on the rights of bodies over which they had no control, he would cast his vote in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill.

*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) said, he sympathised with the notion of the Water Companies being purchased by a Water Trust representative of the County Councils concerned, and he had no doubt that some day that object would be effected. The point however was, what was to be done in the meantime? The hon. Member for Hoxton had said they must march with the times; but in that march not even Water Companies must stand still. For fear of damaging the public interest concerned, and the supply of water, he thought the whole matter should be referred to a Select Committee, where the London County Council could oppose as much as they liked, and probably with success; and there would be an opportunity for considering whether too much power was being given to the Company, or too large an addition made to the capital of the Company. On the other hand, to deprive a Private Company of the right of placing their case before a Select Committee would be to defeat the Constitutional principle that everybody should be able to put their case before a proper tribunal. It was all very well for the London County Council to say that they were only going to oppose the Bill for a year: but this matter would probably go on for 10 years. It involved so many County Councils and such large water schemes that it could not be settled in 12 months. Therefore, to prevent injustice to the Company and any danger to the public water supply, the matter should go before a Select Committee.

*MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.) said, the authority which was responsible for the supply of water to the Metropolis was the various Water Companies. These Companies might be all that had been said of them, but the fact was that London was going to get its water from them in the immediate future, and there was no other source of supply. If the County Council had brought forward a

scheme, or if there was a scheme which the House could look upon as sound and practical, he would vote for its consideration. He had voted against this Bill last year, but he should now vote for it being sent upstairs, as the Report of the Commission was known. The Water Companies who were responsible for the supply of water must from time to time send to Parliament for sanction of schemes, otherwise water could not be supplied. Therefore, he thought that, whatever might be the faults of the Bill—and there were a great many, no doubt, in it—the Water Companies were entitled to the opportunity of showing before a Committee whether the scheme they brought forward was right and necessary. The London County Council could be heard before the Committee. They could bring forward all the evidence they had brought forward to-day—careful and deliberate evidence, not mere statements. It would be hard on the Water Companies if the powers they desired, rightly or wrongly, to acquire should be refused at the dictum of the London County Council. He trusted that before long either the London County Council or the Government would mature a scheme; but, unfortunately, the Government does not seem to have made up its mind, and the County Council has also failed to make up its mind. Therefore, he thought it hard that the only powers which now existed for supplying London with water should be put a stop to by the London County Council. When the Committee had considered the Bill, and had put into it powers for obtaining capital, an opportunity would be afforded to the County Council for bringing the subject again before the House when the Bill came up for Third Reading.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, that the hon. Member who had just sat down, although perhaps not directly interested in this particular Bill, spoke as a Director of the New River Company.

*MR. CAINE said, it was true he was a Director of the New River Company, but he only sat upon the Board as representing an Insurance Company. He had no personal interest whatever in the New River Company, and he might say that whatever fees he had received he

had parted with to his Insurance Company.

MR. S. BUXTON said, that in regard to these matters they wanted Water Companies and Insurance Companies, and all interests represented in Debate in the House. He had only intended the House to understand that his hon. Friend was connected with one of the interests represented in the Debate. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, especially the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, did not quite appreciate the position taken up by hon. Members on the Ministerial side of the House. They argued the case for the Bill as a question of detail, as a matter for examination by a Committee. That was entirely contrary to the position which he, in common with the other opponents of the Bill, took up. They contended that this was not a question of the merits of the particular scheme, but a question of principle, as to whether, before there had been an opportunity of the County Council considering the water supply as a whole, these somewhat smaller matters should be dealt with and decided by a Committee of the House. What was the actual position of the Bill before the House? The Water Companies were coming for powers for a further capital expenditure of £1,750,000, and the House was entitled to say that before such an enormous additional expenditure was sanctioned there should be a proper opportunity of considering the whole question of the London water supply. The Royal Commission had been appointed to report whether any fresh water supply was required for London, and as to the best way of providing it. The case stood in much the same position as last year, for the Commission had only recently reported, and the County Council had not yet had an opportunity of considering the question as a whole. Until the Council had had that opportunity, it was only right that no large expenditure should be carried out to the prejudice of the ultimate settlement. All that was asked was that until that opportunity was afforded—an opportunity which the appointment of the Royal Commission was intended to give—no large expenditure of the kind contemplated in the Bill should take place to prejudice the ultimate settlement of the question of the London water supply.

Mr. Caine

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, the storage works proposed in the Bill were recommended by the Royal Commissioners as immediately necessary.

MR. S. BUXTON said, that what the Royal Commissioners recommended was that extended storage works, mains, and so on, were required in London, a thing which no one for a moment denied. He did not think, however, that the Royal Commission specifically stated that the particular storage works to which the hon. Member referred were required. It seemed to him that the object of the consideration of the subject by a Royal Commission was to give an opportunity for the consideration of the subject as a whole. He understood that the Council were ready to consent to any reasonable proposal with regard to mains and reservoirs shown to be urgent, but that they were not ready to assent to such an enormous expenditure as that proposed in the Bill, believing that it would have the result of prejudicing the general question. He did not think that the delay of a year would matter, and if the Bill came up next year and the County Council were not then in a position to say what they would do, not having decided upon a line of policy, he, for one, would support the Bill. If the Companies had been able to carry on for 25 years without coming to Parliament, they could surely wait another 12 months. He appealed to the House if any great Corporation in the Kingdom, representing a large body of ratepayers, asked for a year's delay in such an important matter, would the House for a moment deny the claim?

SIR R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, he would not trouble the House long. He would not have troubled it at all had it not been for an extraordinary observation made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. He could not help saying that the reference made by the hon. Member for Tower Hamlets—he might call it the sneering reference—to the hon. Member for Bradford was most uncalled for. Coming from the Government Bench and spoken on behalf of the Government, and when the hon. Member for Bradford had told them but a few minutes before that he had voted against the Second Reading of the Bill last year, such a reference was unworthy, suggesting as it had done that the hon.

Member's vote was influenced by his connection with the New River Company. He would point out, after the details of the Bill had been considered in the Committee upstairs, the Preamble would have to be proved. What said the right hon. Gentleman? He suggested that this Bill was really promoted in order to inflate the value of the shares of the Company in view of possible purchase. What was the expenditure proposed under the Bill?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: No, no.

SIR R. WEBSTER said, that he thought the right hon. Gentleman had adopted the suggestion. If he had not, he (Sir R. Webster) withdrew the statement. The hon. Member for St. George's (Mr. Benn) had made a distinct statement that the proposed expenditure was not required in order to enable the Water Company to fulfil its statutory obligations, but to inflate the value of the shares. No doubt the hon. Member would be candid enough to stand to his guns when that fact was stated. What was the expenditure which would take place under the Bill? It involved three things—reservoirs, filtration, and mains. How possibly could reservoirs, filtration, and mains inflate the capital of the Company? He spoke with some knowledge on this subject, although he regretted to say he had not 6d. in any Water Company in London. Anyone who said that, in a drought such as that of last summer, if a Water Company found itself unable to supply sufficient water to its consumers it could go and obtain it from its source of supply, knew very little about this business, however learned he might be in other matters. No one must imagine that a Water Company could dispense with ample storage reservoirs. He ventured to say that if any Water Company did not maintain an ample and increasing surplus of storage reservoirs, it did not do its duty to its constituents, judging from the experience of the past. Then, as to mains, expenditure in this direction did not mean putting money into the earth which would not earn a return. The Directors were not such fools as to do a thing of that sort. It meant that in those districts growing by their thousands it was absolutely essential that mains and supply pipes should be laid down, so that the consumers could get a proper supply. But the burning

question had been whether or not there had been sufficient and proper filtration; and in order to keep the supply of water in proper condition it was only the duty of the Water Companies to maintain filtration in the highest state of efficiency. These were the questions on which the Water Company had to justify their proposals before the Committee. If the County Council had any real case against the Company, the proper place to examine into it was before a Select Committee, where the witnesses who supported it could be cross-examined. A point which had been overlooked was this: He should like to know on what ground, either of principle or otherwise, the London County Council had a right to say to the inhabitants of Essex they should not have the improved water supply they desired, and which this Bill proposed to give them? What had been the principle which had been recognised over and over again? Why, that each locality should supply itself with water and have control over its water supply. They had had that at Stockton, Middlesbrough, and at Birmingham, and in regard to this Bill the London County Council were arrogating to themselves a position they had no right to assume, and for which there was no precedent. He trusted that, whatever might be done in Committee and when the Bill came back to the House, in the name of fair-play and justice it would now be read a second time. Otherwise an impression would go forth that Her Majesty's Government opposed the Second Reading because they could count on a majority in the House which they could not count upon after the Bill had been examined. Under the circumstances, he hoped the House would see that the whole question was examined and sifted, and this could only take place before a competent Committee, constituted as they liked, where witnesses were examined.

MR. CAINE said that, with the indulgence of the House, he would observe that he had not taken the remark of his hon. Friend the Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. S. Buxton) in the sense in which it had been understood by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir R. Webster).

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said, he desired to say a word or two in reply to the remarks which

had fallen from the hon. Member for West Ham. The hon. Member had made an appeal well calculated to impress the House on behalf of his constituents, whom, he said, suffered from a scanty supply of water. The hon. Member had asked if his constituents were to be thirsty and dirty because the London County Council could not make up its mind. It was quite true that the people of West Ham had suffered wrong, and had complained of their water supply. The London County Council knew the reason. Complaints having been made to the Council as to the mysterious scantiness of water, they made investigation into the matter, and found that it had been the practice of the East London Water Company to insert a plug in the pipe supplying the cisterns so that the water merely dribbled into them. In individual cases where complaint was made the Company removed the plugs, but had the unparalleled impudence to charge the customer with the cost of the removal.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, he should like to say a word or two from the point of view of his constituents the inhabitants of Essex. He failed to understand the interest taken in the water supply of his constituents by the hon. Member for Hoxton, seeing that for every 100 persons within the jurisdiction of the London County Council supplied by this Water Company there were 1,000 people supplied outside that jurisdiction.

MR. J. STUART said, the hon. Member was mistaken. For every one person supplied in the Essex district two were supplied in the district of the London County Council.

MAJOR RASCH said, that his information was exactly the reverse. They all knew that the object—the plan of campaign—of the County Council in taking so much interest in the water supply of the people of Essex was to cripple the Water Company, so as to be able to buy it up at half-price. The Company had been prohibited from taking any more water from the Lea, and they could not construct reservoirs without further capital. He had been Chairman of a Water Company for 10 years, and had some intimate knowledge of the subject. The matter was very simple. The Royal Commission had interdicted the East London Water Company from taking more water from the River Lea,

and therefore the Company had to construct fresh storage reservoirs. This they could not do without raising fresh capital. Even the London County Council would be unable to do so. What with betterment, worsement, taxation of land values, and looking after the morality of music halls the people of Essex thought the London County Council had their hands too full already, and that they would do well to mind their own business and leave the County of Essex alone. He should vote for the Bill.

MR. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, he should support the Bill. He felt some difficulty in taking that course, as he should naturally be inclined to support the County Council. He also found it a difficulty in supporting a cause championed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's (Mr. Goschen), who had said that he thought Scotch Members—and, he supposed, Irish Members—should not interfere in this matter.

MR. GOSCHEN was understood to say that he had no objection to their voting on this Bill, but that he thought there should be reciprocity.

MR. A. O'CONNOR said, that when English Members left Irish business alone, Irish Members would leave English business alone. He could only regret that the right hon. Gentleman made it so difficult for an Irishman to support a cause which he advocated. He (Mr. O'Connor) would wish to help the London County Council within the sphere of their jurisdiction, but he could not follow them into Essex, when he found that the Council for that county were supporting the other side. As an Irish Member he might remind the House that there was a larger Irish population in London than in Dublin, and that a large portion of that population was in the district affected by this Bill. It was for the sake of the poor who lived in the small houses of the district to whom a good and a prompt supply of water was of the first importance that he supported the Bill.

MR. JOHN BURNS said, it was hardly worth while going into the merits of the arguments which had been advanced, or even into the details of the Bill. But he would like to reply to the observations of the hon. Member for North West Ham, who had suggested that the London County Council were in

favour of dilatory tactics in this matter, and that they had not submitted any scheme to the Water Companies. Now he ventured to deny that, and to assert that the hon. Member in this matter did not represent his constituency: he simply spoke the views of a few officials who happened to agree with the views of the Water Companies. What were the facts? At the end of a long and exhaustive inquiry the Royal Commission reported in September last. That Report did not reach the London County Council until November, and practically was not submitted to the Council until the beginning of the present year. Thereupon a Committee, assisted by the able engineer of the Council and other officials, drew up a counter Report, which had just been circulated, and which would be found to deal with the matter on fair and reasonable lines. In the circumstances, it did not seem to him that it was unreasonable to ask that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months. The Essex people had compelled the London County Council to take over a large part of their main drainage system, and now apparently wished to dictate the conditions under which the water works should be purchased. The attitude of the Government was, in his opinion, right. The House ought not to allow the Members for Essex to dictate to 5,000,000 people the conditions for the purchase of these water works. The hon. Member for North West Ham had no right to ask the London County Council to be the servant of Essex in respect of the unpleasant parts of its municipal work, and to deny it equal rights in determining under what conditions the water works should be purchased. If the London County Council were to pay the piper they ought at any rate to be allowed to call the tune. He thought the Government had adopted a sensible and correct view. They said that the London County Council, representing as it did an overwhelming majority of the people of London, was not unreasonable in asking that the Bill should be rejected, seeing that as yet it had had no time to consider the Report of the Royal Commission, and that until a definite decision had been arrived at the Directors of the Water Companies and a few Members for Essex ought not to be allowed to dictate to 5,000,000 of people as to the

conditions under which they would purchase the water works.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I will not detain the House many minutes, but I wish to say a word or two on the general principle involved. Perhaps I should preface my observations by saying that I am not a shareholder in any Water Company, and that I speak merely as a ratepayer of London who has learned very much from provincial experience. What is the position of affairs? Sooner or later the London County Council are bound to decide whether or not they will purchase the property of the Water Companies, and I hope that they will purchase. Up to the present, however, they have not come to any decision, neither is there any power which can force them to come to a decision within a reasonable period, and the question for consideration is whether, until they shall have arrived at a final determination, no Water Company in London is to be permitted to increase its capital? The London County Council does put forward a most exaggerated claim in regard to the water question. The Under Secretary for the Colonies says a similar demand by a Provincial Corporation has never been refused. I say unhesitatingly that never has a similar demand for delay been granted on the application of any Municipality. Birmingham has some knowledge of the ways of the London County Council. When Birmingham asked for power to obtain a supply of water from the Welsh hills, saying that within a short time the town would probably suffer from drought, the London County Council opposed the scheme, and averred that the statement was untrue. They said there would be no drought, but there was, which showed how little reliance could be placed on their scientific knowledge. The County Council opposed the scheme, asking for time to enable them to decide whether they might not themselves require the particular water supply which Birmingham had selected. The County Council should make up their minds to deal with the matter now under consideration fairly and speedily. Their demand for delay is monstrous. The hon. Member referred to the experience of Birmingham. Has he taken the trouble to find out what that experience was? I negotiated the purchase of the water

works there. What did we do? We (the Corporation) asked them to come to terms. We were unable to do so. We then stated what price we were prepared to give, and asked the House for compulsory powers of purchase on those terms. That application was refused. We were told to go before an arbitrator, and by agreeing to terms we saved the expenses of an arbitrator.

MR. BENN : That is precisely the course the London County Council propose. I think the right hon. Gentleman will find our terms are identical with those adopted at Birmingham.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN : I think I have been unnecessarily interrupted. I undertake to say that if the representatives of the London County Council are prepared to make the East London Water Company the same offer that was made to the Birmingham Water Company by the Municipality it will be accepted. The right course is for the London County Council to make up their minds as to what is the fair value of the property of the East London Water Company, and to make an offer accordingly. If the terms are refused by the Water Company let the County Council then come to Parliament and ask for official powers. If they do that I will support the Second Reading of the Bill. I think it is monstrous that before taking this course they should seek to interfere with every scheme for the extension of the water supply. I think they have had time to make up their minds. I have never known a Bill to be dealt with in this way before. I must say that it is a most dangerous precedent that a Private Bill should be dealt with in this House upon political considerations.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 228 ; Noes 227.—(Division List, No. 14.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

THAMES CONSERVANCY BILL.

(By Order.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge), in moving the Second

Mr. J. Chamberlain

Reading, said, the Bill sought to enlarge the jurisdiction of the Conservators of the Thames. The condition had been imposed upon them that if they did not bring in a Bill this year the London County Council would bring in one next year, and the result of the compromise arrived at had been that the Thames Conservators had brought in the Bill of which he had the honour of moving the Second Reading. The great point in its favour was that it would do away with no less than 32 existing Acts by which the Conservators were governed, going back as far as the reign of James I. The Bill, though not approved by the London County Council, deals with the representation on the Board of the Conservancy, which the London County Council desired to have a larger proportion on the ground that the representation should be in proportion to the population. The promoters of the Bill considered that the riparian owners and others in the upper part of the river had as great an interest in the Thames as those in the lower part, and the Bill would commend itself to all fair-minded people, because it gave fair representation to those who were interested in the upper and lower portions of the Thames. A great many Petitions had been presented against the Bill, and many of them were in reference to the representation on the Board. It was recognised that the Board had been well-managed by their Chairman; but he ventured to say, in reference to the suggestion that the Board should consist of 100 members, that it would be practically unworkable if the representation upon it were increased beyond from 25 to 30. Then with regard to pollution of the river, there was no doubt they asked for large powers in that respect; but he thought those clauses in the Bill were of a rather too arbitrary character and ought to be modified. The larger proportion of the Petitions lodged against the Bill referred to the question of pollution, and sufficient powers in that respect must be given, but he hoped that the clauses for that purpose would be made more satisfactory alike to the agricultural interest and the public. Strong objection had been taken to the inclusion of the tributaries of the Thames. The powers of the Sanitary Authorities would be brought into operation in regard to pol-

lution of the River Thames where the Conservators had not considered that to be part of their duty, the surrounding County Councils having hitherto held back from the Conservancy. Those clauses the Conservators were quite willing to have threshed out in Committee, and they hoped the result would be that the water of the river would be kept quite pure, yet without interfering with the agricultural counties and interests in the future more than they had in the past. The great point was that the powers proposed to be given with regard to pollution were larger than they were before; but if it were desired, the Conservators were willing to give up the proposal mentioned, and the course taken by them would, he believed, to a great extent disarm opposition to the Bill. With regard to finance, the proposal was for amalgamation in reference to the upper and lower portions of the Thames, so that the whole river would be under one system of finance, and power would be given to issue £300,000 Debenture Stock, which he thought would be a sufficient sum to put into the hands of the Conservators for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. As to the Water Companies, he hoped they would think better of their threatened opposition to the Bill. They had statutory powers for taking certain quantities of water from the river; but they had been approached in this matter by the Conservancy, and it had been arranged that they should be allowed to take a certain quantity of water out of the Thames under agreement, in order to provide for the increased consumption of their consumers, and the question had been raised whether their claims in that respect were valid or not. The London County Council, no doubt, desired to treat them as invalid, so that they might buy up the Water Companies at a cheaper rate than was possible at present. The promoters considered that this question ought to be dealt with separately, and they had therefore come to an arrangement that whatever powers the Water Companies had should remain as at present. They would not break faith with the Water Companies, but this Bill did not propose to give those bodies greater statutory powers than they now possessed. The House would see, therefore, that the Conservators, while keeping faith with

the Water Companies, were acting in the interests of the public. At present the Companies took 110,000,000 gallons daily from the river with power to increase the quantity to 130,000,000. For many years the Conservators had done all they could to preserve the purity and improve the navigation of the Thames, and nobody could have done its duty better, and the clearest testimony had been given that they had fully done their duty towards the public. They had not sold their water to the Water Companies. They had spent certain sums for the benefit of those Companies, but had in return received money from them for carrying out necessary works. The Conservators had certainly prevented a large amount of pollution; had equalised the flow of the river; and had secured a constant supply in summer by widening and deepening the reaches, and by other works. This Bill ought, in the circumstances, to be read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee for thorough examination and amendment rather than be thrown out now on Second Reading. The Conservators had no wish whatever to oppose the provisions of the Bill being thoroughly threshed out; on the contrary, they only desired to carry it through for the good of all who were interested in the Thames, considering not only the interests of the people of London, but those of the populations of Richmond, Reading, Oxford, and other places upon its banks. It must not be forgotten that the Counties of Gloucester, Wilts, Berks, and Bucks were equally interested with Middlesex in this matter, and the Conservators considered that the acceptance by the House of such a scheme as this would do equal justice to all. It would throw enormous work upon the Conservators, but he hoped it would be accorded a Second Reading, and that on reaching Committee it would be put in a shape which would be satisfactory to all.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir F. Dixon-Hartland.*)

*MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, he would not oppose the Second Reading, because, as the hon. Member in charge of the Bill had explained, the reasons which had led to the

proposed opposition had been removed by the arrangement come to between the London County Council and the promoters of the Bill. The grounds of the opposition were that it was proposed to give larger statutable powers to the Water Companies than they had at present in reference to drawing water from the Thames. Those Companies had lately claimed increased rights under agreements of which the validity was disputed. However, he would not then go into the questions either of the validity of those agreements or the statutable rights of the Companies. Whatever their legal rights might be, they would not be interfered with in any sense by the Bill. That was the understanding arrived at with the promoters, and an Instruction to the Committee had been drawn up. If this Bill were not passed the bringing in of another would devolve on the London County Council, and it was therefore not their desire that it should be prevented from going to a Committee. But though not opposing the Second Reading, it must not be understood that the County Council approved of the Bill. On the contrary, there was a great deal in it of which they entirely disapproved. However, the framework was there, although he feared it was incapable of being made in Committee into a Bill which would carry their support, and they therefore desired to reserve power to themselves to oppose it if necessary on the Report stage or Third Reading if the various provisions to which the County Council objected were not amended in Committee. Many questions would arise, and, among others, that of the money which the Conservators required. As in the other respect referred to, the Bill left everything absolutely *in statu quo*, he would withdraw the opposition to the Second Reading, and move the Instruction which had been agreed upon between the promoters of the Bill and those whom he represented.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) wished, as a Surrey man, to be allowed to say a few words. He was very glad the hon. Member for Hoxton had been good enough to withdraw his opposition to the Bill in which the Division of the County of Surrey that he had the honour to represent was greatly interested. The people there had come to the conclusion

that in matters of this kind they ought to object to representation going by population instead of according to area, for by the application of that doctrine they would have greater authority and would prevent others having an undue amount of control over the lower Thames. Though they were profoundly concerned and somewhat anxious in this matter, they nevertheless desired to refrain at present from criticising this measure, because they had an honourable understanding with the promoters of the Bill that various Amendments would be accepted in Committee. In that expectation they had instructed him to recommend to the House that the Bill should be allowed a Second Reading.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (London), upon the question of representation on the Board, said, the shipowners of London paid in dues about £46,000, which was about half the whole sum expended on the River Thames between Staines and the estuary, and their interest certainly was inferior to none. They had no desire to oppose the Bill on Second Reading, but would appear before the Committee and do their best to amend it, and put it in a more suitable shape. He was instructed to explain to the House that they did not accept the Bill as a settlement. He hoped a Bill would be brought in at some future time which would give to the merchants and the shipowners of the Port of London a predominant control over the lower Thames. He considered that the City of London had a predominating interest in this matter, and should have a corresponding influence upon any Board of Control. Emphasising that they did not regard this by any means as a final settlement, he would not then trouble the House further or oppose the Second Reading.

SIR W. HART-DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said, his constituents were much exercised with regard to their future under the Bill. To millowners the question of the Companies taking water from the river was of extreme importance. As the Bill now stood very harsh measure might be meted out to millowners and others. With every desire to prevent undue pollution, he was sure no Member of the House would wish to injure their vested interests unnecessarily in any shape or way, and he would urge that, assuming the Bill went to a Com-

Mr. J. Stuart

mittee, his constituents and others who were interested as respondents should have the power of modifying certain of its provisions as far as they deemed necessary consistently with carrying out the main objects of the Bill.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND said, it was desired to increase the flow of water rather than to diminish it, and the promoters had no wish to interfere with the interests of the millowners. Some of the conditions appeared very hard indeed, and, as far as he was concerned, he would be prepared to do his best to assist millowners and the interests connected with agriculture. He could only say he would do all he properly could to have the Bill modified in those respects in Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

MR. J. STUART moved—

“That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Bill that no further powers of taking water from the River Thames than may now be legally exercised be given by the Bill to the Water Companies, and that, as far as necessary, the Bill be amended to give effect to this Instruction.”—(*Mr. J. Stuart.*)

Motion agreed to.

WEST MIDDLESEX WATER BILL.

(*By Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read a second time.”

*MR. J. STUART intimated that, as the sense of the House had been taken upon the East London Water Bill, he did not now propose to offer any opposition to the Second Reading of this measure, considering it proper, after the close Division, to allow this Bill also to go before the Committee. The circumstances of this Bill, however, distinctly differed from those of the East London Water Bill. They had a very strong case against the West Middlesex Bill, for he held in his hand a statement issued by the Company in April, 1892, in which they described their works as in a thoroughly good condition, and capable of meeting all demands for the present and in the future by extension from time to time. Since then there had been only an increase of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the demand for water, and the Company's capital was not yet exhausted. Thus the case against the

Bill was a strong one, but the House being so evenly divided it would be as well to let this Bill also proceed to a Committee. He would, however, reserve the right on a future day to place before the House certain Instructions to the Committee on this and the other Bills.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

LONDON STREETS AND BUILDINGS BILL.

BILL COMMITTED TO A SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, he had to move that the Order for the committal of this Bill should be discharged, and that the Bill should be committed to a Select Committee of 11 Members, six to be nominated by the House, and five by the Committee of Selection. If hon. Members examined the Bill they would see that it affected a large number of interests and was of wide extent, and he thought they would agree with him it was one which should be dealt with as a Public rather than a Private Bill. He had to complain of the comparative secrecy with which Bills of this kind were dealt with, and he might point out in reference to this Bill that had he not taken the present course of moving to refer it to a large Committee very few of those affected by this Bill would have known anything of its existence. He wished to make known a fact that might surprise the House as much as it surprised him. The Bill was read a second time on March 22, the day before Good Friday, when very few hon. Members were present. The Vestry of Chelsea had made application for a copy of the Bill, and were told that it was under revision, and that a copy would not serve their purpose at that particular time. A second application having been made, the clerk of the London County Council, in a reply dated on the very day on which the Second Reading was taken, stated that the revision of the Bill was not sufficiently advanced to enable a copy to be furnished to the Vestry. That he held to be a very serious statement. The importance of the measure might be estimated by the fact that it repealed 10 Public Acts, including Metropolitan Building Acts and Metropolitan Manage-

ment Acts. It professed to be a Consolidation Act. Hon. Members were aware that he was a strong advocate of consolidation, but this was a Consolidation Bill of a very peculiar character, changing the whole aspect of the law in relation to the matters to which he had referred. That being so, and looking to its wide-reaching nature, he wished to see the Bill referred to a large Committee. He appealed to his friends on the London County Council to support the Motion. It would be remembered that last April they had to call in question Acts relating to Eastbourne, Ower Darwen, and Reading, and to complain that in Private Bills legislation was introduced dealing with Public Acts. The tendency of late years in the House had been to minimise Private Bill legislation and to maximise legislation by Public Act, and it was in pursuance of that policy he asked for the appointment of this Committee. Hon. Members very seldom saw the Bills which were submitted to the House. Although they very properly trusted the Committees upstairs, they had a perfect right to see the Bill, and, having examined this measure, he had come to the conclusion that in consequence of its far-reaching character this was not one which should be left in the hands of an ordinary Committee. He appealed to the House not only to pass this Motion, but also to be always on the alert to see that private legislation was not allowed to overshadow public laws.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Order for Committal be read, and discharged.

That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee of Eleven Members, Six to be nominated by the House and Five by the Committee of Selection.

That all Petitions against the Bill presented six clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions against the Bill, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill against such Petitioners.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

That Seven be the quorum."—(*Mr. Howell*.)

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.) said, he had only a word or two in supporting the Motion. He wished to state that he had had communications from different parts of the Metropolis pointing out the ob-

jections urged by his hon. Friend, and he hoped the House would see fit to support the Motion.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, he did not intend to oppose the Motion; but while sympathising with the general objections against attempts to alter public law by means of Private Bills, he submitted that in this case it was not only right, but almost the duty of the County Council to proceed in this matter by Private Bill. He had not been an advocate of the action of the London County Council in attempting to pass measures by means of private procedure, but he did fear that this Bill, which contained many valuable provisions affecting the health of the inhabitants of the Metropolis, would not have had the remotest chance of being passed if left to struggle in the crowd of public measures. He did appeal to hon. Members opposite to be a little consistent in these matters, and he would remind them that only this week the House decided that a Bill embodying very novel principles should go through by private procedure. Why should not this Bill have been treated in the same way. They had been told that in the last Parliament there were plenty of means of getting Bills like this through in the form of public legislation, and it was claimed that what was done by the last Parliament could be done by this. But he would reply to that that they now had not only a new Parliament but a new Government which was literally besieged by competitive claimants for Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and it was probable that in the competition Bills to which nobody could object would lose all chance of becoming law. It was for this unfortunate but irresistible reason that he believed the London County Council were right in proceeding with that urgent measure by means of Private Bill legislation. Still, he welcomed the Motion of the hon. Member opposite, because he wished to see carefully examined some objectionable clauses which were contained in the Bill.

*MR. J. STUART said, he was sure the House would be glad to hear he had no opposition to offer to that proposal. He was only sorry that advantage had been taken of that occasion to find fault with the action of the London County Council in their procedure in this matter,

Mr. Howell

it being a difficult question to decide whether this ought to be a Public or a Private Bill. In making the present Motion his hon. Friend had only anticipated a step which the County Council themselves were prepared to take, as he had intended to move a Motion which would have secured the result aimed at by his hon. Friend. Under the circumstances, however, he would accept the Motion now moved.

Motion agreed to.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

Alfred Money Wigram, esquire, for County of Essex (Southern or Romford Division).

The Hon. Arthur George Brand, for County of Cambridge (Northern or Wisbech Division).

QUESTIONS.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if it is a fact that Her Majesty has had no Minister in Venezuela since 1887, owing to the action of the then President of the Republic; and if he can cause an unofficial representation to be made to the new President, General Crespo, by the friendly offices of Count Kleist, the German Minister, who extends his courtesies to British residents at Caracas, that Her Majesty would be willing to resume diplomatic relations should a wish to that effect be expressed by the Government of the Republic and a friendly reception assured to Her Majesty's Envoy?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Diplomatic relations with Venezuela were suspended on the 21st of March, 1887, and have not yet been resumed. Her Majesty's Government are desirous of a friendly and equitable settlement of the questions at issue between the two countries, and their views on this matter have on more than one occasion been communicated to the Venezuelan Government. As recently as last year negotiations were carried on with a special Venezuelan Envoy who visited England,

but they proved unsuccessful. As the Venezuelan Government are already aware of the views of Her Majesty's Government, it is not considered necessary to make a special representation to General Crespo on the subject.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

MAJOR DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield): On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for North St. Pancras, I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether any Report has been obtained by the Governors of Christ's Hospital as to the suitability, or otherwise, of the site purchased by them at Horsham for the erection of the new school buildings; what is the nature of such Report; whether the site fulfils all sanitary requirements; when, and by whom, was the Report made; and will it be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The question relates to a transaction completed more than a year ago by the Council of Almoners of Christ's Hospital, in the course of carrying into effect the scheme established under the Endowed Schools Acts for the regulation of the Hospital on the 15th of August, 1890. No such Report as is mentioned in the question has been communicated to the Charity Commissioners, and they are, therefore, unable to give the information asked.

LUNATICS IN BELFAST WORKHOUSE.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of additional nurses and officials appointed to the lunatic department of the Belfast Workhouse since 1st November last; also the number of deaths in the lunatic department since that date, and the number on which inquests have been held; whether the epileptics are still kept in the lunatic department, and if the Local Government Board has instructed the epileptics to be so kept there; whether, at a recent inquest on an epileptic who died in that department, held in Belfast, the coroner's jury strongly protested against this practice; whether he will state by what authority epileptics are placed there, or lunatics kept under restraint in the

workhouse ; whether he is aware of the practice of exchanging patients carried on between the workhouse authorities and the Governors of the asylum at Belfast ; and if some inquiry will be made into the whole system in relief of these helpless afflicted persons ?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): At the same time, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman when he proposes to introduce his promised Bill dealing with the detention of pauper lunatics in Irish workhouses ?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): (1) A medical officer and six male and female attendants have been appointed to the lunatic department of the Belfast Workhouse since November 1 last; 41 deaths have taken place in the lunatic department since that date, and the number of inquests held was 10. (2) Epileptics, I am informed, are still kept in the lunatic department, but the Local Government Board have not directed that they should be placed or kept there. The matter is one appertaining to medical administration, and rests solely with the responsible medical officer. I understand, however, that the epileptics occupy separate dormitories, day-rooms, and sick wards, and are only associated with the lunatics in the dining-hall. (3) The reply to the third paragraph is in the affirmative. (4) The authority for the employment of restraint in this, as in all civil hospitals, is the order of the responsible medical officer, who directs that it shall be imposed when he deems it necessary for the safety of the patient or those about him. (5) The practice referred to in paragraph 5 did exist prior to March, when it was terminated by the Guardians. As regards the concluding paragraph, and the question which stands in the name of the hon. Member for South Tyrone; just before the Autumn Recess I stated that the whole question of lunacy administration was receiving my careful attention, and that I hoped to confer at an early date with the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums on the subject. In consequence of communications which afterwards passed between me and the Inspectors, I have caused a Bill to be prepared dealing with the whole question of lunacy reform, including the particular branch of the

question referred to by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The Bill, however, inevitably contains matter which I fear might be regarded as contentious, and in the present state of public business I see so little prospect of carrying it into law this Session that I do not think it worth while to include it. On the other hand the object aimed at by the question of the hon. Member for South Tyrone should not, I conceive, be regarded as controversial, and I shall see whether it is possible to introduce a separate Bill dealing with this branch of the subject.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I may explain to the right hon. Gentleman that the question was intended to refer only to pauper lunatics.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): Would the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman change the incidence of the charge from the poor rate to the county rate? Such a Bill would be most contentious.

MR. J. MORLEY: I think the hon. Member had better wait till he sees the Bill.

TOWN PARKS IN IRELAND.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the general dissatisfaction in Ireland, particularly in Ulster, with reference to the present state of the law relating to town parks; whether his attention has been called to the decision of the Land Commission in the case of Mrs. Letitia M'Cann, tenant, and the Marquess of Downshire, landlord, recently heard at Belfast, wherein the village of Dundrum, County Down, which had a population of only 372 in 1881, was decided to be a town to which the exemption from the benefits of the Land Acts applied; is he aware that the Land Commission had previously decided that Dundrum was not such a town at the passing of the Act; whether he is aware that the Cowper Commission recommended that the exemption should not apply to any town under a population of 5,000, and that the late Government accepted in the House of Commons, in the Land Bill of 1887, an Amendment providing that the exemption should not apply where the population was under 2,000; and whether some steps will be taken to preserve to tenants in towns in Ireland their property in such lands held outside the towns.

Mr. M'Cartan

MR. J. MORLEY : In reply to the first paragraph, it is very probable that some dissatisfaction is felt as alleged. My attention has been called to the matters stated in the second and third paragraphs in the question, and I am informed that the facts are as indicated by my hon. Friend. I am aware that the Cowper Commission made a recommendation to the effect stated. I am not aware, though I have no reason to doubt, that my hon. Friend is correctly informed as to the proceedings in Committee on the Bill of 1887. In reply to the last paragraph, I think it will be open to the Select Committee which I am proposing to appoint to suggest improvements in the law in respect to the matter alluded to in this question.

MR. M'CARTAN : The right hon. Gentleman is probably aware that the Amendment adopted by this House reducing the limit of population was thrown out in another place.

MR. KNOX : Can the right hon. Gentleman give any reason why a place which was not a town 10 years ago and has not increased in size in the interval is not deemed to be a town now ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I cannot answer that question without notice.

TENANTS' IMPROVEMENTS IN IRELAND.

MR. M'CARTAN : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the large number of tenants in Ireland whose holdings have been exempted from the benefits of the Land Acts ; whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. John Robb, of Belfast, tenant, and the Marquess of Downshire, landlord, where the Land Commission decided to fix an extra rent on the improvements made by the tenant, without any contribution from the landlord, on the ground that such improvements were too good for the holding ; and whether the terms of Reference to the proposed Committee will be so extended as to include inquiry into the cases now excluded by the defects of the Land Acts, but which are equally entitled to the benefits which these Acts were intended to confer on all the farmers of Ireland ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I am not aware of the actual number of the holdings ex-

cluded from the operation of the Acts. In reply to the second part of the question, the Land Acts do not entitle a tenant to exemption from rent in respect of improvements which are unsuitable to the holding, and I am informed that the Land Commission decided in this particular case that the improvements in question should not be exempted from rent because they were not suitable to the holding, treating it as an agricultural or pastoral holding. In reply to the third paragraph, I am not prepared to admit that the provisions above mentioned do constitute a defect in these Acts, or that the Legislature intended that these Acts should confer such benefits as the question refers to.

EXAMINATIONS FOR IRISH MONITORS.

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in what cases, and for what periods, are schools deprived of the teaching services of monitors by reason of the failure of such monitors to pass the 1st of July examination ; and will he recommend that for the future the appointment or apportionment of monitors to schools for each year shall take place after the monitors have passed these examinations, so that the schools may run no risk of being deprived of the assistance to which their attendance entitles them ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by me to this question on the 1st of March ?

LESSON BOOKS IN IRISH SCHOOLS.

MR. BODKIN : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can furnish the particulars of any case in which the application of the manager of a national school for permission to use in such school lesson books other than those published and supplied by the Board of National Education in Ireland was complied with, and of the arrangements made in such case for the protection of the monitors and children in such school in regard to the examinations usually held in the special lesson books provided by the Board from the use of which such school had been exempted ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The Commissioners of National Education report that there were numerous cases in which the managers of national schools applied for

permission to use lesson books other than those supplied by the Board, but in none of these cases was exemption claimed for either pupils or monitors from examination in the Board's lesson books. In cases where other books were permitted, it was open to the Inspectors to arrange with managers and teachers as to the examination of the pupils. Monitors must be examined in the books prescribed in the official programme.

MR. BODKIN: Can the right hon. Gentleman give me particulars of any cases in which permission was granted?

MR. J. MORLEY: I think the cases referred to will be contained in a Return recently granted by this House, and now in course of preparation. It will be presented probably by the end of the month.

MR. BODKIN: Am I to understand that in all cases in which permission was granted, the monitors, although allowed to use lesson books other than those supplied by the Board, were compelled to be examined in the books prescribed by the National Board?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot add anything to the answer I have already given.

HABITUAL OFFENDERS.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a Memorial from a Conference attended by representatives of the Town Councils of Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Greenock, and Perth, the Convention of Royal Burghs, the Parochial Boards of Edinburgh, and a number of philanthropic societies in Scotland, praying for a Royal Commission to inquire into the best means of dealing, by means more effective than now exist, with habitual offenders, vagrants, beggars, and inebriates; and whether Her Majesty's Government will in the public interest issue such a Commission as prayed?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I have received the Memorial referred to. The question of dealing with habitual drunkards was considered and reported upon in 1893 by a Departmental Committee appointed by the late Home Secretary. There was no Representative of Scotland upon the committee, which is matter for regret; but witnesses from Scotland were examined

before it. I understand that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary proposes to bring in a measure, in accordance with the recommendations of that Committee, which will contain provisions applicable to Scotland, as well as England. It would, therefore, seem desirable to await the consideration of the terms of this measure before deciding whether a further Committee should be appointed to inquire into the mode of dealing with inebriates in Scotland. I will, however, consider whether a kindred inquiry of the same character might be conducted in Scotland into the important question of habitual offenders.

THE FAILURE OF GEORGE BARKER AND COMPANY.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that, although the estate of the firm of George Barker and Company has been in liquidation for nearly two years, only one dividend of 1s. has at present been paid to the creditors; and whether, considering that a large number of poor persons are interested in the winding up of the estate, the Board of Trade can take action to bring about a speedy settlement of its affairs?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I am aware that only one dividend of 1s. in the £1 has at present been paid to the creditors in the joint estate of George Barker & Co., and 20s. in the £1 on the separate estates. The estate has been administered by two trustees and a Committee of Inspection elected by the creditors. The Board of Trade, in consequence of certain facts which were brought to their notice, removed the two trustees of the 6th ultimo, and the estate is now vested in the Senior Official Receiver of the High Court as Trustee. It is hoped that a further dividend will shortly be distributed.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Can the Official Receiver act quite independently of the Committee of Inspection? If not, can the power to do so possibly be granted him, in view of the grave charges made against the Committee?

MR. MUNDELLA: The trustees having been removed, the Committee of Inspection will come under the orders of the Court.

Mr. J. Morley

ENFIELD AND SPARKBROOK FACTORIES.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any alteration in the orders to be given to the Enfield Small Arms Factory for Navy rifles has been made since the Ordnance Vote was taken in March?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley) (who replied) said: No alterations in the allocation of rifles to be manufactured during the financial year have been made since the Ordnance Factory Vote was taken on March 16. It was then explained by the Secretary of State that Enfield and Birmingham would be worked as part of one establishment, and that it had been arranged that 15,000 rifles required by the Admiralty should be allocated to Sparkbrook, the completion of rifles in hand, the manufacture of cavalry carbines, and the conversion of Martini-Henry rifles for the Artillery, with other demands for the now current year, providing work at Enfield for a number of hands not less, I hope, than those employed at the present time.

MR. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Will the sum voted for wages still stand?

MR. WOODALL: Yes, the only change is that the two factories are now to be worked as part of one establishment.

MR. A. C. MORTON: Is it not a fact that it costs 25 per cent. more to manufacture the rifles at Sparkbrook than at Enfield?

MR. WOODALL: No, Sir.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): Then how much more does it cost?

MR. WOODALL: If the hon. Member will give notice of the question I will come prepared with an answer.

EASTERN PONDOLAND.

MR. WHITELEY (Stockport): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Government has further information as to whether the Colony of Natal will have any voice in the terms of annexation of Eastern Pondoland so far as relates to the trade carried on between the two countries; and seeing that the trade of Eastern Pondoland has hitherto been carried on through Natal, and Natal merchants and traders have invested capital in the country and upon

the borders, whether the Government will provide that no restrictions shall be placed on the importation of goods from Natal, so as to divert the trade to the Cape Colony?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am afraid it would be inexpedient for me, at the present moment, to add anything to the answer I gave on the 20th of March to the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool.

THE DUM-DUM MURDER.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if his attention has been called to the finding of a Court Martial, presided over by Colonel Steevens at Ahmedabad on the 13th of March last, when Private O'Hara, of the Leinster Regiment, was accused, and found guilty of shooting three comrades, two of whom were killed, when under the influence of liquor; and is this the same Private O'Hara who was condemned to be hung at Calcutta by Justice Norris and a British jury for the murder of Sheik Soleim at Dum-Dum, but who was afterwards re-tried before a Commission of Judges and acquitted, the Bench holding that Judge Norris committed a technical error in his Charge to the jury, although the evidence was clear with regard to O'Hara's guilt, and no doubt was attempted to be thrown on the justice of his sentence; and, if so, is it in accordance with the Rules of the British Army in India, that a man who has been proved guilty of the murder of a Native should return to his regiment, and continue in the Queen's service?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) (who replied) said: I have seen in the newspapers a report of the Court Martial at Ahmedabad on Private O'Hara, but not of the finding and sentence of the Court. The Private O'Hara referred to in the second paragraph of my hon. Friend's question was tried and convicted for a murder committed at Dum-Dum. In India, as in this country, power is reserved to refer questions of law to a Court of Appeal. This was done in the present instance, and the Court, with the express concurrence of the Judge who tried the

case, decided that the conviction was wrong and must be quashed. I am informed that the soldier O'Hara, who was the subject of these proceedings, was discharged from the Army.

THE STAMPING OF WEIGHING MACHINES.

MR. CAINE : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if an Inspector is justified in seizing any weighing instrument which is not stamped in the county where it is discovered, though it has been stamped by the Inspector of another county ; is it the duty of Inspectors under such circumstances to point out to the owner the special requirements of his own County Council, and so give him, before taking any proceedings, the opportunity of getting it altered so as to comply with their interpretation of the Act ; if it is possible for the Board of Trade, without legislation, so to assimilate the various and differing requirements of County Councils with regard to the stamping of weighing machines as to obviate the frequent proceedings which are now inevitable ; and, if not, will he introduce a Bill for the purpose ; will he reduce the Inspector's fee from 5s. to 1s. ; and will he arrange for costs to be borne by the parties sustaining the adverse verdict ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Weighing instruments, although stamped in the district of one Local Authority, may, under existing law, have to be re-stamped if used in trade in the district of another Local Authority. It rests with the County Councils who appoint the Inspectors to give owners of weighing instruments reasonable opportunity for complying with the provisions of the Act. It is undesirable to interfere with the discretion of County Councils in making requirements with regard to stamping weighing machines, as the administration of the law has been placed in their hands by Parliament. The Board of Trade have no power to alter the fees, which are fixed by Statute, or to amend the legal procedure as to payment of costs.

REGISTRARS OF BIRTHS AS POLITICAL AGENTS.

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware

that Robert Halliwell, the present Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths in Wigan, is the agent of a political Party in the town, and was a surety for the recent political Petition case in Wigan, and that he is now a political candidate for one of the wards in the town ; whether these are permitted to any person holding such an office under the Government ; and, if the conduct of the Registrar is contrary to the Rules of the Service, what course will be pursued by Government ?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) : I learn from the Registrar General that Mr. Halliwell has held the office of Registrar of Births and Deaths for more than 26 years. He is also a Registrar of Marriages. The Registrar General has no knowledge as to the political views of Mr. Halliwell, or as to his being an agent of a political party. Registrars of Births and Deaths are appointed by the Guardians. They are not salaried officers of the Government, but derive their emoluments from fees. There is nothing in the Regulations which would prevent their undertaking any duties which do not clash with their duties as Registrars, and the Registrar General considers that he has no power to interfere with the officers in respect of the work which they may undertake out of office hours.

INDIAN COTTON GOODS IMPORTS.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he can state what proportion of the total imports of British cotton goods into India consist of coloured and printed goods which are not manufactured in that country ; and whether, in the case of the goods referred to, the Government of India would be permitted to impose such duties as were necessary for Revenue purposes ?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) : On the average of the last three years about 21 per cent. of the cotton goods imported into India consist of coloured or printed goods. The Tariff Act has been passed, and there is at present no proposal on the subject of Indian Import Duties before Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

MR. WHITELEY : Are we to understand the 21 per cent. are all British goods ?

MR. H. H. FOWLER : I should not like to say that.

SIR D. MACFARLANE : Is it the intention of Her Majesty's Government to allow the Government of India a free hand in dealing with these imported goods ?

MR. H. H. FOWLER : I do not quite understand the hon. Member's question. The Tariff Bill has passed into law, and there is no proposal before the Government with reference to the imposition of Import Duties.

SIR D. MACFARLANE : I understood the objection was, that native goods were to be protected at the expense of British goods. I take it that that will not be the case.

IRISH POST OFFICE CLOTHING CONTRACTS.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can now state whether it would be possible to have a condition inserted in the contract for the supply of clothing for the Irish Postal Service that, assuming price and quality to be equal, the material shall be of Irish manufacture ?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : A fresh contract for finished garments is about to be made for one year on the lines of the old contract, and it will contain no stipulation as to the place where the contractors are to obtain the materials. It is proposed next year to separate the contracts for materials and for tailoring ; and then it will be open to Irish manufacturers to tender for the supply of cloth.

THE REV. JOHN HERKLESS.

SIR C. DALRYMPLE (Ipswich) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Rev. John Herkless, who has just been appointed to the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St. Andrews, has taken a degree at any University, or whether he has otherwise gained distinction in literature, divinity, or general scholarship as a qualification for a Professorial Chair ? Since I placed the question on the Paper I have discovered that I have been misinformed as

to the facts ; but, as the question appears, I think it only right to put it.

SIR G. TREVELYAN : Mr. Herkless, to use the words of the Very Reverend the Principal of the University of Glasgow, was one of the most distinguished students of his time at that University. Dr. Caird writes—

"Seldom, if ever, has it fallen to any student as in his case, to be equally eminent in the Faculties of Arts, of Theology, and of Medicine. He is, as this University record indicates, a man of wide and varied knowledge ; and any productions from his pen which I have seen show him to be possessed of no little literary faculty."

His book on Cardinal Beaton, according to the Reverend Herbert Storey, Professor of Church History in the University of Glasgow, is marked by

"great historical accuracy, critical acuteness, and freshness of presentment."

The Reverend Alexander Mitchell, the predecessor of Mr. Herkless in the Chair of St. Andrews, writes—

"I have always heard from my friends in Glasgow University that Mr. John Herkless was one of the very foremost students of his time, and carried off an amount of University honours in Philosophy, Science, and Theology such as falls to the lot of few. In the Class of Biblical Criticism he especially distinguished himself, and since leaving Glasgow University he has had ample opportunities of prosecuting that and other favourite studies, first by residence at the German Universities, and latterly in his quiet country manse."

I do not think that the House would expect me to read a long list of testimonials from men admirably capable of judging, of which these are a specimen. When at Glasgow Mr. Herkless obtained by way of University honours :—The Cleland Gold Medal in Theology, the Rae Wilson Gold Medal in Theology, the University Medal in Mental Philosophy, the John Hunter Medal in Science, the Henderson Prize in Theology (equal), the Marshall Bursary in Divinity, the Smith Prize, given to the best student of the year in the Glasgow Presbytery, and in class work he won seven highest prizes in Divinity, four highest prizes and one second prize in Church History, four highest prizes in Biblical Criticism, three prizes in Moral Philosophy, and others which I need not recapitulate. I do not very well see how Mr. Herkless could have had a more distinguished University career. I have written to ask him what his degree is. He is not, I think, a Doctor of Divinity.

THE DEFENCES OF COLOMBO.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has had his attention drawn to the opinions of Royal Engineer officers and other experts, in condemnation of the sites upon which the two batteries already constructed for the defence of the harbour of Colombo (Ceylon) have been located; whether, in view of that condemnation, the War Department will delay the further construction of similar works until such time as the new harbour extensions resolved upon have been so far proceeded with as to enable a correct judgment to be formed as to the best positions in which such new batteries should be placed to ensure the defence of the harbour; and whether the War Department will send out qualified officers, independently of the present staff at Colombo, to consider the whole subject of these defences, and to report upon the alleged unsatisfactory position of the sites already occupied and of those proposed?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No Reports condemnatory of the sites on which batteries have been erected at Colombo have been brought to my notice. The sites are the best available, taking into account the other necessities of the Colonial Government in the locality, and they are sufficient for the defence of the harbour. The harbour extensions may, perhaps, involve some readjustment, but I see no present occasion for any special inquiry.

ROYAL NAVAL ENGINEERING EXAMINATIONS.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether, as Manchester is now a seaport, he would cause examinations of the Royal Naval Engineering College to be held there, as is done in certain other ports in the United Kingdom, and in view of the very suitable material to be found amongst the population of the district, of which Manchester is the centre, for adding to the engineering strength of the Navy?

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): I am happy to inform my hon. Friend that a proposal has been made by the Admiralty to the Civil Service Commis-

sioners that Manchester and Birmingham should be made centres for the examination of candidates for entry into the Training School for Engineer Students at Keyham.

CEYLON RIFLE RANGE.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is acquainted with the fact of the insufficient length of the present rifle range at Mount Lavinia, Ceylon, and that, as a consequence, the men of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, although supplied with the Lee-Metford rifle, have to be practised in rifle-firing with the obsolete Martini-Henry rifle; and whether instructions have been sent out to push forward the establishment of adequate ranges at Bandarawella and elsewhere in Ceylon?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The facts are as stated in the first paragraph of the question. We are in correspondence with the Government of Ceylon as to the establishment of proper ranges for the Lee-Metford Rifle.

"PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" INDEX.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the Index of *The Parliamentary Debates* for Session 1893-4 will be ready?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The contractor assures me that no pains are being spared to finish the Index referred to, but he cannot yet say precisely when it will be ready. I am sure my hon. Friend will appreciate the exceptional character of the case owing to the length of last Session, involving almost double the usual number of volumes, and the fact that the indexing for the present Session has to be proceeded with concurrently.

MR. BARTLEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a month has now passed since the Session closed, and that the Debates are really inaccessible without an Index? Would not a private firm have made up the Index in half the time?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: It is certainly a month since the Session closed, but I may remind my hon. Friend the number of volumes has gone up from eight to 14,

and we must make some allowance for the contractor under the circumstances.

HARBOURS OF REFUGE ON THE EAST COAST OF YORKSHIRE.

MR. HOLDEN (York, E.R., Buck-rose) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received a copy of a Resolution, passed by the County Council of East Yorkshire, referring to the disastrous storm which swept the coast on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of November last, and urging the desirability of the construction on the East Coast of Yorkshire of a harbour of refuge; and whether he is prepared to take any steps in response to this resolution?

MR. MUNDELLA : Yes, Sir; I have received the Resolution referred to, and have replied to the County Council that the Board of Trade cannot encourage the idea that the Government will construct harbours of refuge at the public expense, an idea which has been repeatedly discouraged by successive Governments.

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES.

MR. RICHARDSON (Durham, S.E.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can now fix the date on which he will bring in a Bill to deal with railway rates and charges?

MR. MUNDELLA : I hope to introduce this Bill very shortly, but I cannot fix the day at present.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester) : Can the right hon. Gentleman give an approximate time?

MR. MUNDELLA : I cannot say more than that I hope it will be very shortly.

LICENCE FEES.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state by what authority, whether statutory or otherwise, fees are levied by the Home Office on various licences and other instruments; whether the same fee of £7 13s. 6d. is charged for a licence to stop a footway, for a licence to establish a theatre, for a grant of Quarter Sessions, and for a suffragan bishop or prebendary; and whether he can state on what principle this exact sum is fixed in such dissimilar cases?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : Various non-statutory fees are taken at the Home Office in pursuance of very ancient usage. Such fees are all paid into the Exchequer. The sum of £7 13s. 6d. has been charged in regard to all the cases mentioned, all of which were carried out by Letters Patent. The principle would appear to be that the same fee is charged in respect of all such Letters Patent, irrespective of the purpose for which they were required. Such charges were sanctioned by the Treasury in 1881. As regards a footway, no application for Letters Patent appear to have been received since 1874.

ALDERSHOT POLICE STATION.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Hampshire County Council sent plans for additional cells to the police station at Aldershot and for a new police station at Farnborough some six months ago to the Home Office for approval, and that the County Council has not yet received any answer to that application; whether he is aware that additional accommodation is greatly required in the above-named places; and whether he will use his influence to prevent any further delay?

MR. ASQUITH : In the event of a Local Authority desiring to raise a loan to defray the cost of the erection or improvement of a police station it is necessary to obtain the approval not only of the Secretary of State, but also that of the Local Government Board. The plans in question having been received from the Hampshire County Council in August, 1893, by the Secretary of State for the Home Department were, after consideration by the Surveyor General of Prisons, forwarded to the Local Government Board, and the final approval of the suggested alterations has been deferred pending the usual inquiry by the Local Government Board, and such inquiry has been delayed owing to the omission of the clerk of the county to supply the Local Government Board with the information asked for in repeated communications from that Department.

RELIGIOUS IMPARTIALITY IN INDIA.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to a notification, dated 9th December, 1892, in *The Sindh Official Gazette*, under which an educational qualification, including a knowledge of English, is required from Hindu candidates for Government Service, while a lower qualification, not including a knowledge of English, is required from Mahomedan candidates; whether such difference of treatment, depending on difference of creed, is in accordance with the requirement of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858; and whether he will disallow this notification as being inconsistent with such requirement?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: My attention has been called to the notification to which my hon. Friend refers. I am not prepared upon such information as I have received to express any opinion as to this particular case, but I will bring it under the notice of the Government of India.

*SIR W. WEDDERBURN: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiry from the Government of India as to whether similar notifications have been issued in other parts of India infringing religious impartiality?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I am not prepared to order an inquiry. I think, if such a notification is carried out, it would be unfair, as it would seem to bear the complexion of religious partiality in favour of one portion of Her Majesty's subjects.

TEXT BOOKS IN INDIAN SCHOOLS.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is the case that a large portion of the text books, both English and Vernacular, prescribed for use in the Government and aided schools in the North-West Provinces, have been compiled, as a private enterprise, by Mr. Nesfield, the Director of Public Instruction for the North-West Provinces; and whether such arrangement operates to create a monopoly, and to exclude other text books from those schools?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I have no information on the subject of my hon. Friend's question. The matter is one for the Local Government to consider, and

would seem to be a proper subject for a question in the Local Legislative Council.

DISTRICT COUNCILS.

COLONEL GUNTER (York, W.R., Barkstone Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, in a case where a man is elected by co-optation a member of a Board of Guardians, does he also become by such election a member of the District Council?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The question as I understand refers to persons who are elected by Guardians from outside their own body under the provisions of section 20 (7) of the Local Government Act of last Session. Persons who are so elected by the Guardians do not thereby become members of either the Urban or Rural District Council.

THE VOLUNTEER DECORATION.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that a Volunteer decoration is to be given to all Volunteer non-commissioned officers and privates, as it has already been given to all Volunteer officers, of 20 years' service and upwards, he will consider the possibility of making some adjustment of the Regulations to qualify those officers for a decoration who, although they have served for more than 20 years, are eligible for neither decoration, owing to the fact that part of their service has been in the commissioned and part in the non-commissioned ranks?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is not advisable to alter the conditions laid down by Warrant for the officers' decoration, but the new decoration will be open to any officer whose total service as a Volunteer entitles him to it, but who has not received the officers' decoration.

SIR C. FREEMANTLE'S COMMITTEE.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of Sir C. Freemantle's Committee on the conditions of service and remuneration of office-keepers, managers, &c., in the Public Departments, with the Treasury Minute thereon of the 19th of February, 1894?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The Report was that of a Departmental Committee,

and, as such, a confidential document, and therefore I should not feel justified in laying it upon the Table, but I will at once lay the Treasury Minute of the 17th of February, 1894, referred to.

EDINBURGH CASTLE ROCK.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what arrangement has been come to between the Treasury and the Town Council of Edinburgh to repay to the City of Edinburgh the £2,000 paid last year into the Treasury by the North British Railway Company in compensation for part of the Castle rock taken for the improvement of the Company's lines?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am informed that the Corporation of Edinburgh have received a sum of £2,000 for their interest in the lands in question held by them from the Crown, and I do not understand what supposed arrangement is referred to, there being nothing left to arrange so far as the Woods and Forests are concerned. The compensation received by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests for the Crown's interest was carried to the capital account of the Land Revenue.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: Is it not the case that the Council of the City of Edinburgh have applied for repayment of the sum?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes; but they have no claim to it.

EDINBURGH COMMISSARY OFFICE.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has yet been able to examine the case of the staff of the Commissary Office, Edinburgh, as he undertook to do during the discussion on the Estimates last year; and, if so, whether he can state to the House the conclusion he has arrived at?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: In accordance with the promise I gave the hon. Member, I have again considered the position of the staff of the Commissary Office in Edinburgh, and referred it for further consideration to the Treasury; but their Lordships have come to the conclusion that the question of placing these clerks upon the establishment of the Civil Service cannot be regarded by itself, as their case is practically the same as that of the numerous body of *employés* who constitute the staff of the offices of Government Solicitors and of

other legal or *quasi*-legal Departments. I may add that the views of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury were fully communicated by me to the Head of the Commissary Office in December last; but that, on receipt of his reply, I did not feel that it would serve any useful purpose to again re-open the question with the Treasury.

THE BURIAL ACTS.

MR. G. ALLSOPP (Worcester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any Memorials have been received at the Home Office with reference to an amendment of the Burial Acts similar to the Memorial forwarded by the Corporation of Worcester; and, if so, to mention the towns that have forwarded such Memorials?

MR. ASQUITH: About 34 Burial Boards, out of probably 1,100 or 1,200, have presented Memorials on the subject referred to. A list of them would exceed the ordinary limits of an answer, but I have given directions that a list shall be sent to the hon. Member.

INSTRUCTION FOR DOCKYARD APPRENTICES.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that apprentices in the shipwrights' and fitters' trades in Sheerness Dockyard receive 11 hours' instruction per week, while in 10 other trades only four hours is given; and whether he can see his way to return to the old system—namely, all apprentices to attend the same school and receive the same instruction?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: The attendance at the dockyard schools, as quoted by the hon. Member, is in accordance with existing Regulations. The whole subject of the future management of these schools is now being inquired into by a Committee recently appointed by the Admiralty.

MILITARY VERSUS CIVILIAN LABOUR.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the fact that soldiers are being employed by a contractor at daily wages unloading coals at Spike Island, County Cork, thus depriving the Queenstown

coalporters of work ; and whether, in the interest of free labour, he will take immediate steps to put a stop to this practice ?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I have caused inquiries to be addressed to the General Officer commanding in Cork, but have not yet received a definite reply. Meanwhile, any help the soldiers were giving has ceased.

DELAGOA BAY RAILWAY.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the arbitration award on the Delagoa Bay Railway is likely to be promulgated; and, if not yet made, what is the cause of the delay ; and whether the dispute was submitted to the three jurists at Berne, Switzerland, in August, 1891 ?

*SIR E. GREY : It is impossible to say when the award will be given. The Rules of Procedure were not finally fixed till February, 1892, and the British case was communicated to the Portuguese Government by the Tribunal of Arbitration in April, 1892. Several extensions of time have since been granted for the delivery of the counter case, the rejoinder and the reply, at the request of each of the parties respectively, and this has been the cause of the delay hitherto. The term fixed for the delivery of the Portuguese reply is now the 27th of next July.

LISMORE AGRARIAN TROUBLES.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to speeches made at Lismore, County Waterford, by, amongst others, an hon. Member of this House, on the 18th February last, at a meeting held for the purpose of denouncing a person resident in the locality who had taken a farm from which a tenant had been evicted 12 years previously ; whether the police refused to allow the meeting to be held beside or on the farm in question, but allowed it to take place at a distance of one mile off ; if the police have orders to permit such meetings provided they are not held in the immediate vicinity of the evicted farms ; whether he has been advised that the meeting was an illegal assembly, and

that the language made use of by the speakers was sufficient to maintain a criminal prosecution ; and if he will state why such a meeting is permitted, and no step taken to prevent the use of such denunciations ?

MR. J. MORLEY : My attention was drawn to the speeches made at the meeting referred to, and the statement in the second paragraph of the question is accurate. As to the third paragraph, the police have no general instructions in the matter ; each case is dealt with, as it arises, on its merits. I have not been advised that the meeting was an illegal assembly ; and as regards the speeches made, I was advised they were not of a sufficiently violent character to sustain a criminal prosecution for conspiracy or otherwise.

PUBLICANS AND MILITARY PENSIONERS.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will direct the police of the A Division to prevent the publicans in Great Peter Street and district, notably the proprietors of the "Star and Garter" and "Elephant and Castle," from selling liquor to drunken pensioners and reservists, and so prevent the scenes that regularly take place, and which on Monday and Tuesday of this week were particularly conspicuous ?

MR. JEFFREYS : Before the question is answered, I wish to ask Mr. Speaker whether it is in Order to insert in the question the words "drunken pensioners and reservists," which, I submit, implies an unfounded charge against a body of honourable and respectable men ?

*MR. SPEAKER : Under the Rules of the House the hon. Member who put down the question is responsible for the statement as to the condition of those persons at that time.

MR. ASQUITH : I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in the immediate neighbourhood to which my hon. Friend refers there are five registered common lodging-houses, which accommodate about 1,200 men. Immediately opposite the "Star and Garter" and "Elephant" public-houses there is a registered lodging-house with accommodation for 400 men, many of whom

are reservists and pensioners from the Army. At pension time (which occurred on Monday last) these men spend their money very freely in drink, and frequent quarrels take place. The attention of the police is at all times drawn to the locality, especially on pension days, but no serious disturbances have been noticed, and the people generally disperse when called on to do so. The Inspector who passed through Great Peter Street on Monday and Tuesday last, and the other officers engaged there, state that, although several persons were seen who were more or less drunk in the streets, they did not notice any irregularity in the public-houses, or it would have been at once reported. Publicans have been summoned from time to time for permitting drunkenness on their licensed premises, one so recently as the 3rd instant, when a fine of 40s. and costs were inflicted. The police are at times called by the landlords to eject drunken people, but they were not appealed to on Monday or Tuesday, and what quarrels there were occurred in the streets.

MR. BARTLEY: Has the attention of the Secretary of State for War been drawn to the fact that pensioners are paid in comparatively large sums; and would it not be much better to pay them in smaller sums at shorter intervals?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: If the hon. Member will put that question down on the Paper I will endeavour to answer it.

CANADIAN ELECTION DISPUTES.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have received telegraphic information from Newfoundland to the effect that the Election Judges, having disqualified a portion of the Government majority on principles which are thought likely to apply to a large number of seats, including those held by the Government themselves, the supporters of the Government have petitioned the Governor to dissolve the Legislature elected last November, at the elections to which the large number of Petitions against Government Members apply, while, on the other hand, the Opposition have offered to form a Government; and whether there is any objection to at once lay upon the Table, for the information

of the House, the Papers which have been transmitted to the Colonial Office by cable telegraph?

MR. S. BUXTON: The Governor has reported by telegraph that a Deputation of the supporters of the Government in the Assembly introduced by the Prime Minister had petitioned him to dissolve. Last night a further telegram was received stating that the Governor had received a strong protest from the Opposition Members against this course. The Governor is in communication with his responsible advisers, and no further statement can be made at present on the subject.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE IRISH LAND ACTS.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is now in a position to say when the Motion for the appointment of the Select Committee on the Irish Land Acts will be made?

MR. J. MORLEY: I very much regret to say, in answer to the hon. Member, that I am still not in a position to say when this appointment will be effectively made. I have, as the hon. Member is aware, done my best to meet the objections taken to the form of Reference by hon. Members opposite, and I have altered it to that end. I understand that the alterations do not meet all the objections that are taken, I believe, as to the Committee making land purchase the first head of Reference. My own view is that the inquiry would probably extend through the whole of the present Session. The Committee, therefore, would have to be re-appointed, if the House thought fit, next Session, and that would be the time at which it would be perfectly open to gentlemen who object to this Order of Reference to state their objections. But I am not prepared, in face of the large interest that I know is taken by all classes and by all parties in Ireland in the whole length and breadth of the Reference, to alter it further. I do not feel I would be doing my duty if I altered the form of it.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: May I ask whether, in view of the opposition to the Reference as it stands, the right hon. Gentleman will take an opportunity of allowing the House to discuss it, and come to a judgment on the matter, as

every day lost is of the utmost importance?

MR. J. MORLEY: I quite agree with the hon. Member that every day lost is a loss of great importance, but I cannot at the present moment—considering the time now at our disposal, and the very heavy charges upon that time—I cannot at the moment think of allowing a day for its discussion.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman does he think it would be possible to report even within the time of three or four Sessions on this matter, and whether he would not take the first portion first as being the most urgent?

MR. J. MORLEY: We shall take the first portion first as a matter of course, but I do not agree with the hon. Member that it would take the time of three or four Sessions to cover the whole inquiry. I may say that no doubt if the hon. and learned Gentleman were there and exerted his ingenuity that it would take some little time. But I assume that the Select Committee will follow the ordinary practical habits of Committees of this House, and I do not think in that case it will take so long.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he would consider the propriety of restricting the Reference in this year to the first part of the Reference which is on the Paper? That is a portion which, I think, would meet with universal approval. Then next year we could consider the question of an augmented Reference, as he himself admits that the augmented Reference cannot be dealt with this year.

MR. J. MORLEY: We do not know what accidents may occur, and I think the right hon. Gentleman himself will admit that it would be very rash for any Government to narrow the scope of an inquiry which they deem of the highest importance, and which the people of Ireland, of both Parties, generally desire to have instituted in as wide a form as possible.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that the Representatives of the great majority of the people of Ireland think that there are questions connected with the purchase of land quite as urgent as any connected with rent,

and whether he would receive a suggestion that it would be well to go forward with what he considers urgent, and not waste time in endeavouring to conciliate an irreconcilable opposition?

MR. J. MORLEY: No doubt in a very important part of Ireland the purchase part of the question is quite as important as any other.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid): Might I ask whether the inquiry would not be expedited if the portion relating to the Landed Estates Court were postponed, as that raises the question of incumbrances?

MR. J. MORLEY: I think we are rather conducting a discussion upon this subject. In answer to the hon. and learned Gentleman, I will say this—that the Committee, as a practical body, would deal with the land purchase before they proceeded to the question of incumbrances.

LUNATICS IN IRELAND.

SIR T. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has yet decided to issue a small Commission of experts to inquire into the circumstances and causes of the great increase in the number of lunatics in Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums have not so far satisfied themselves or me that a new Commission of Inquiry is necessary, but I am giving the matter further and special consideration, and meanwhile, as the hon. Baronet is doubtless aware, I have laid on the Table of the House within the last few days a special Report which I had called for from the Inspectors on the subject of the alleged increasing prevalence of insanity in Ireland.

GERMAN EXPORT TRADE.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the report of the foreign trade of Germany given in the last issue of *The Statist* and to the increase it shows in German exports in 1893, compared with 1892, in every line but one, and to a total amount of £8,525,000, even iron showing an increase of 12 per cent.; and if, having regard to the decline in British exports by £8,500,000 in the same periods, and by £45,000,000 between 1890 and 1893,

Her Majesty's Government propose to take any steps to relieve the depression in trade?

MR. MUNDELLA: The full particulars of German exports for 1892 and 1893 will be found in *The Board of Trade Journal* for March, and they show an increase in 1893 over 1892 of about £8,500,000. 1892 was the lowest year of German exports since 1885, whereas British exports in that year were £14,000,000 in excess of 1885. British exports in 1890 were £50,000,000 in excess of 1855, whereas German exports have not risen in any year to anything like the same extent as our own. It is impossible, therefore, to make comparisons by the rise or fall of a single year. There can be no doubt that German trade profited to some extent by the dispute in the coal trade last year, and the Government are anxious, as far as possible, to prevent such disputes, but they have no intention of changing the commercial policy of the country.

THE BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether the terms of the Behring Sea Award Bill have received the specific approval of the Government of the Canadian Dominion; and whether the Bill is identical, so far as can be, with the Bill on the same subject now before the Legislature of the United States?

***MR. S. BUXTON** (who replied) said: (1) The Dominion Government are in general agreement with Her Majesty's Government as to the terms of the Bill, but have raised objections in regard to one or two points of detail, which will receive due consideration. (2) The American Bill differs in form from the Bill before this House, but it is understood to be substantially in accordance with the Bill which stands for Second Reading to-day.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: Will those points with which the Canadian Government disagreed be considered before the House meets on the 10th day of the Bill?

MR. S. BUXTON: I understand the points to which I have referred will arrive by mail either to-day or to-morrow, and they will therefore be in time for

the Committee stage of the measure on Monday.

***MR. GIBSON BOWLES:** Was the agreement of the Canadian Government to this Bill given unconditionally, or as in the *modus vivendi* conditionally on compensation being given to the Canadian sealers?

MR. S. BUXTON: The Canadian Government are in general agreement with Her Majesty's Government as to the terms of the Bill, and I do not understand that they attach any conditions.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: They have not asked for compensation?

MR. S. BUXTON: Please give notice.

LABOUR IN GERMAN CONVICT PRISONS.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to an article in *The Hardwareman* of the 3rd March last, purporting to be the description by a Special Commissioner (who had been sent to Germany for the purpose) of the concessionaire system now obtaining in some 20 or more of the German convict prisons; whether he is aware that, under this system, English goods and English patterns are pirated and copied by the German Prison Authorities, and turned out in tons by the convicts at a labour cost of 3d. to 1s. per day; that this convict labour is let out to a concessionaire or gaol manufacturer, who has only to supply the necessary plant and raw material, and who exports to England, as British-made goods, the articles made by the prisoners from pirated English designs; and that the higher class German dealers refuse to touch these prison-made goods, while the inferior tradesman who deals with them tries to conceal their origin; whether the above facts are generally known to the British public; and, if not, whether he will take steps to warn the public against them in *The Labour Gazette*, or otherwise; and also make representations to the German Government on the subject; and whether he can explain why it is that the Merchandise Marks Act is powerless to stop such fraudulent misrepresentation?

MR. MUNDELLA: Probably the hon. Member has not seen my reply to a similar question put by the hon. and

gallant Member for Central Sheffield. I am making inquiry as to the alleged importation of these goods. The provisions of the Merchandise Marks Act are sufficient to prevent goods coming into this country with false trade descriptions attached.

THE EVICTIONS IN ARRAN ISLANDS.

MR. SEXTON : I wish to direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland to the evictions now proceeding on the Arran Islands, and to ask him whether he is aware that the Islands are eight miles from the nearest land, and 40 miles from the nearest Courthouse; and whether owing to the failure of the fishing the people on these Islands have been left so destitute that appeals to public charity have been made on their behalf? In the second place, I wish to ask whether, owing to the evictions, a number of people, including aged persons and children, have been left without shelter, as well as without food, and what steps the Government have taken, or what steps they intend to take, to ensure the safety of the lives of the destitute people?

MR. J. MORLEY : In answer to my hon. Friend, it is true, as he has already stated, that these Islands are some distance off, and that communication with them is not easy. My information is this—that yesterday six evictions were carried out, and that in three of the cases the people were re-admitted as caretakers. To-day two tenants settled with the agent, and eight evictions were carried out. Two of the eight persons were reinstated as caretakers. I have no information, as yet, as to the condition of the people yesterday and to-day; but I am perfectly sure that if the story which my hon. Friend states were true, and that any such persons had been evicted and cast out on the bleak hillside, the officers on the spot would have informed me of that fact. As to the condition of the poor people, I was informed some fortnight ago that they were likely to suffer extreme distress, independent of the evictions. We at once despatched an Inspector of the Local Government Board to make inquiries. He did so, and reported that the people were weather bound. He made exhaustive inquiry into the case of the South Island, which is the worst and poorest of the three, and his

Report was that in his opinion the relieving officer had means at his disposal for dealing with any cases of emergency that might arise. This Inspector is to-day in Galway, and he has been directed to pay close attention to the circumstances of the people of Arran, and if necessary, to go over there at once. Meantime, the relieving officer has been told (a fortnight ago) the exact steps he is to take in case any circumstances of emergency arise.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question with reference to the business down on the Paper for Monday. I may remind the Government of the pledge given before Easter to put down the Navy Building Vote for Monday, and I presume that the idea of the Government is that the general discussion which has been promised shall be taken on the Vote. I wish now to call the attention of the Government to a decision given by the Chairman which greatly restricted the scope of that discussion, and to ask, whether they have in contemplation any method by which that Debate shall at least have the extension promised by the Government, and which I am sure the Government intend to allow?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I was not aware of any recent decision which would narrow the discussion. On the contrary, I understood that there was a general consent in all parts of the House that for convenience of business the discussion should be extended beyond the ordinary scope of the Vote. This has always been done in special cases and in special circumstances under the authority of the Chair.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN : Perhaps the Chief Secretary can say whether in the event, which seems to be probable, of the Debate on the Scottish Standing Committee not concluding this night—["Oh, oh!"]—I will go further and say that it is absolutely impossible—will the Government make any change in the arrangements for Monday, or will the Navy Estimates still be taken on Monday?

MR. J. MORLEY : I regret that, owing to the absence of the Leader of the House from circumstances of domestic affliction, I cannot answer the question

specifically, but I cannot hold out any hope that there will be an alteration in the arrangement for Monday, whatever may be the fortunes of the Debate this evening.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MAILS.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if it is the case that the Union mail steamer *Athenian* arrived at Plymouth at 4 o'clock on Monday last, and that none of the letters were delivered in the City till the next morning, although they were delivered in the Western District the same day? Can the right hon. Gentleman explain the cause of the delay?

*Mr. A. MORLEY: The *Athenian* arrived in Plymouth Sound at 4.20 a.m. on the 2nd instant, and her mails, for the landing of which an hour to an hour and a-half would be required, were forwarded by the first train from Plymouth at 8.45 a.m. The correspondence for the Western District was sent out by the delivery commencing at 4.15 p.m., and that for the Eastern Central District by the delivery commencing at 5.5 p.m.

MOTION.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the proceedings on the Motion for the Appointment of a Standing Committee on Scotch Bills, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House."—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 203 ; Noes 173.—(Division List, No. 15.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.—(No. 123.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.) rose to move the Second Reading of this Bill. He said: I have now to ask the House to pass the Second Reading of what is shortly called the Behring Sea Award

Bill, although that perhaps scarcely describes it, because the use of the Bill extends far beyond that. It might more properly be described as a Bill for carrying into effect the award of the Tribunal of Arbitration constituted under the Treaty between Her Majesty and the United States. Mr. Speaker, from indications made to me by hon. Members sitting in different parts of the House, I gather it is expected that I should—although I do not think it necessary to do so at any great length—recall to the attention of the House the circumstances which led to the Treaty upon which this Bill is founded, to the character of that Treaty, to the Award based upon it, and finally to the provisions in the Bill now submitted to give effect to that Award. In August, 1886, several seizures of vessels engaged in fur sealing were effected in the Behring Sea by cruisers of the United States, the vessels so seized belonging principally to British subjects, being Canadians. On the facts coming to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government of the day, the late Lord Iddesleigh, who was then at the Foreign Office, addressed, on the 30th of October, 1886, an important Despatch to the then Representative of the Queen at Washington, in which he called attention to the fact that three schooners had been seized in that part of the North Pacific Ocean called the Behring Sea, and that the crews of two of these vessels had been detained. At that time, as it appeared when the full facts became known to the Foreign Office, one of the vessels had already been brought before a Court of the United States, and the Judge of that Court had condemned that vessel on the ground that she was pursuing the industry of pelagic sealing within the territorial limits of the United States, those territorial limits being claimed under the terms of the concession from Russia to the United States in 1867, which included Alaska and the islands in Behring Sea. The learned Judge who tried the case decided that the ship was properly seized and properly condemned on the ground that she was violating the municipal legislation of the United States, and was so violating that municipal legislation within the United States territory. Lord Iddesleigh then proceeded to complain that in these circumstances

the authorities of the United States had interfered with the lawful occupation of Canadian citizens on the high seas, and had taken possession of their ships, subjected their property to forfeiture, and visited upon their persons the indignity of imprisonment. That was the position assumed as early as October, 1886, by Lord Iddesleigh, and which has never since been departed from by those who represent the Government of the Queen. Following upon this expostulation of Lord Iddesleigh the vessels that had been seized were released and the proceedings stayed by the order of the then Secretary of State at Washington, Mr. Baird; accordingly, the vessels were released. At a later period further seizures followed. By March, 1889, there had been a change of Government in the United States, and the late Mr. Blaine had succeeded Mr. Baird in the position of Secretary of State, and there had followed a long diplomatic discussion between the Representatives of the Queen and the Secretary of State, the correspondence from Great Britain being conducted by Lord Salisbury, who had by that time succeeded to the Office of Foreign Secretary. On the part of the United States, in that correspondence it was sought to justify the action of their authorities in these seizures on the ground that the United States possessed territorial dominion in the Behring Sea under the cession of 1867 from Russia, and on the ground that their legislation applied to foreigners in the area where the seizures were effected, and finally, at a later development of the controversy, on the ground that the United States had property in the fur seal and in the industry founded on its pursuit, and in effect that their law was in the nature of properly protected Regulations for the safeguard of their property and interests. This position was combated—and I need not say ably combated—by Lord Salisbury in his correspondence. He maintained the position originally taken up by Lord Iddesleigh, and he complained that the rights of sovereignty of Great Britain had been violated by these seizures—that there had been a violation of International Treaty and the law thereby affected, but, professed his willingness to submit the question to a properly-constituted Court of Arbitration. The questions of alleged property and of alleged jurisdic-

tion set up by the United States Lord Salisbury also professed his readiness to submit to arbitration, and also the further question if and what Regulations were necessary for the preservation of the seal fishery in the Behring Sea. The answer to the latter question was one which was not exclusively of interest to the United States—although as the owner of the islands, that country had a special interest with regard to it—but was of common interest. I do not think that anyone can doubt the wisdom of the policy pursued by Lord Salisbury in advising that reference to arbitration. I think we must all agree that it would have been a deplorable thing if two great nations, sprung from the common stock, speaking the same language, living under systems of law largely alike, and having enormous interests in common bound up in the interests of peace, should have resorted to the rude arbitrament of force to settle the differences between them. Accordingly, on February 29, 1892, the Treaty from which this Bill took its origin was agreed to between the United States Government and the Government of the Queen, and that Treaty was ratified at a later date. It is necessary that I should call the attention of the House to some of the leading provisions of that Treaty. It recites that differences had arisen, and that both Governments were desirous of providing for an amicable settlement of those differences, concerning the jurisdiction and rights claimed by the United States in the waters of the Behring Sea, and also concerning the preservation of the fur seal fisheries in those waters and the rights of the subjects of either country as regards the taking of fur seals in and habitually resorting to those waters. The Court of Arbitration was thus constituted. Two arbitrators were to be named and were named by the President of the United States—namely, Mr. Justice Harlan, a distinguished Judge of the Supreme Court, and Mr. Senator Morgan, also a gentleman of high reputation; one was to be named and was named by the President of the French Republic, who nominated the Baron de Courcel, Senator and Ambassador of France; one was to be named and was named by the King of Italy, who named the Marquis Visconti Venosta, a distinguished Minister; and one was to be named and was named by

Sir C. Russell

the King of Sweden and Norway, who nominated Mr. Gram, a statesman and a distinguished lawyer. The Representatives of Great Britain were, as the House knows, that distinguished man who has lately passed away from amongst us, Lord Hannen, and Sir John Thompson, the Prime Minister of Canada. I hope the House will allow me to say one word in reference to Lord Hannen. Great Britain owes a great debt to that very distinguished man. I do not propose to add one word to the eulogium upon him as a Judge which has been lately pronounced by more than one of his brethren on the Bench. But in relation to this arbitration I may perhaps be permitted to say that in conjunction with his distinguished colleague he ably and with impressive dignity represented the interests of Great Britain. He discharged the weighty obligations cast upon him with unfailing zeal and with unflinching patience, and while he guarded the interests of Great Britain he never for one moment forgot the fact that he was present in a judicial character, and that he was, as it were, still clothed with the ermine of a Judge. The tribunal met in Paris, and I think it right that I should publicly acknowledge the remarkable courtesy and hospitality that were displayed by the great Republic of France on that occasion. We have to thank the President of the French Republic in two respects—first, for naming as one of the arbitrators on behalf of France a most accomplished and courteous gentleman, the Baron de Courcel, to whose judgment, tact, and courtesy the result arrived at was largely due. As the House is aware, after a protracted hearing, the Award of the majority of the arbitrators was finally delivered on August 15, 1893. What was the effect of that Award? I will state its effect in general language and in few words. Two groups of questions were submitted to the arbitrators which were essentially different in their character and having different considerations applicable to each of them. One set of questions related to territorial jurisdiction and the rights of property, and of protection in regard to that property, and the second set of questions related entirely to what were the proper Regulations which should be recognised to give effect to that which was one of the objects of the Treaty—

namely, the preservation of the fur seal. As regards the first group of questions—those which touched territorial sovereignty, jurisdiction and rights of property—the position taken up by Lord Idlesleigh and Lord Salisbury was thoroughly and completely vindicated, and each one of these questions was decided in favour of the views advanced by those who represented the interests of Great Britain before that Tribunal. One result of the decision on this group of questions was that it stamped the seizures that had been effected as not justified by International Law, and therefore illegal and unjustifiable, thereby establishing the claim of British subjects injured to legitimate redress. I am glad to say, as one would expect from the Government of a great Power like the United States, that the President has not been slow to recognise these claims for redress, and when the legislation necessary to carry out this Award shall have been completed, it is arranged that a Convention shall be signed for the examination and adjustment of those claims with a view to the just redress of those concerned. I must now call the attention of the House a little more in detail to one part of the Award—namely, that relating to Regulations. I have already stated with sufficient fulness the effect of the Award as regards questions of territorial jurisdiction and of property. But, after determining these questions, the Award proceeds to say that the determination of these questions has left the subject in such a position that the concurrence of Great Britain is necessary to the establishment of Regulations for the proper protection and preservation of fur seals in or resorting to the Behring Sea, and Articles 1 to 9 inclusive all lay down these Regulations. The first is that the Governments of the two Powers shall forbid their citizens and subjects to kill, capture, or pursue fur seals within a zone of 60 miles around the Pribyloff Islands, including the territorial waters. That is a permanent zone, and is unquestionably for the purpose of this Award an extension of the protected zone, as to which, apart from this Award, the Power in whose favour it is given would have no International rights. In the next Article the Award creates a close season from May 1 to July 31, that close season

extending over the space included within the 35th degree of north latitude and eastward of the 180th degree of longitude from Greenwich till it strikes the water boundary described in Article 1 of the Treaty of 1867 between the United States and Russia, and following that line up to the Behring Straits. There are then some minor provisions as to the character of the vessels and their equipments, and it requires special licences and distinctive flags to be prescribed by each Government. These are broadly the provisions of the Award. I have to say further in this regard, that there is an addendum to the Award, which is to this effect—

“The Arbitrators declare, moreover, that, in their opinion, the carrying out of the Regulations determined upon by the Tribunal of Arbitration should be assured by a system of stipulations and measures to be enacted by the two Powers, and that the Tribunal must, in consequence, leave it to the two Powers to decide upon the means for giving effect to the Regulations determined upon by it.”

Mr. Speaker, we are here to present this Bill as an attempt to discharge the obligation, which every one in this House I am sure will recognise, to loyally and thoroughly give effect to the provisions of that Award. Had the Award been less favourable to us we should equally, having agreed to abide by the decision of the Tribunal, have been bound and equally have been ready to give loyal and complete effect to it. I have read the Award at sufficient length to render it unnecessary to state the provisions of the Bill in detail. Not only have the Government had the advantage of the assistance of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Isle of Wight before the Arbitration, but he has also been good enough to give his assistance in framing the outline of the provisions of the Bill to give effect to the Award. The provisions of the Bill are shortly these: The measure is practically upon the lines of the *modus vivendi* Act of 1893, but the area over which it extends is, as I have said, wider. It sets out the mandatory provisions of the Award, and it constitutes the violation of these provisions a legal offence punishable by seizure or fine, or in some cases by imprisonment. It is in its operation, I wish the House to understand, a Bill which applies only to British subjects. It does not affect to bind, nor could it properly bind,

American subjects any more than a Bill of the United States could properly affect to bind British subjects. But power is taken under it to authorise the officers of the American Navy to seize British ships under conditions conformable to the provisions of the Award, providing reciprocal power is given by the United States to British naval officers in regard to American ships. I may inform the House that the Senate of the United States have already passed their Bill for giving effect to the Award, and in that Bill similar powers are taken in order to give reciprocal advantages. I have had an opportunity of seeing a somewhat detailed statement of the United States Bill, and I am able to say that, although in form it is somewhat different, it in no substantial respect that I am aware of differs from the Bill now submitted to the House. Further, the House will desire to know what are the Courts by which the seizure of American vessels or British vessels is to be dealt with. In each case it is by the Courts of the country to which the ship belongs. If a British cruiser seizes an American vessel it will be our duty to hand over that vessel to the American authorities to be dealt with in the American Courts. If, on the other hand, a United States cruiser seizes British vessels they will be under a corresponding obligation to hand them over to the British Authorities to be dealt with in British Courts. I hope the provisions are ample to give loyal and thorough effect to the Award. It would be a thing greatly to be regretted if one single utterance by any Member of the House should for a moment lead to the possibility of the suggestion that we were not all most anxious with despatch and with thoroughness to discharge the obligations which undoubtedly internationally rest upon us to abide by the Award which has been made, and to give loyal effect to it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read a second time.”—(*The Attorney General.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I rise not for the purpose of contributing to the Debate more than to say that the course which the Government have pursued seems to me to be a wise one. They have lost not one single moment in bringing in a Bill to carry out the obligations

of this country ; and in doing that piece of International justice they shall have the hearty support of all of us on this Bench and of all our friends.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present ; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said, that those of them who were present had listened with pleasure and satisfaction to the extremely lucid and able speech made by the Attorney General ; but he did think that many hon. Members would regret with him that that speech was not one of greater length. The Debate on the Second Reading of this Bill was an historic occasion in this House. It was the first time in history that certain rights and claims to the harvest of the sea were put to International agreement by means of arbitration. Although the remarks of the Attorney General had a great deal to do with, and did describe, the Behring Sea Arbitration, he (Sir G. Baden-Powell) ventured very humbly to submit that the speech the hon. and learned Gentleman delivered did not refer to the real principle and matter of the present Bill, which was altogether outside the main Award. It was a Bill connected with certain technicalities, but all reference to technicalities were conspicuous by their absence from the hon. and learned Gentleman's speech. He (Sir G. Baden-Powell) did not for one moment speak in any sense against, or stand in the way of, this Parliament, or this country loyally adhering to the carrying out of the decision come to by arbitration ; but they had now before the House a Bill which did not—although its title said it did—in any way legalise or authorise the main awards of that arbitration. He wished, in reference to the Bill and dealing with its principles, to criticise them in the light of certain knowledge he happened to possess and which he did not think any other Member of the House possessed or could possess. He was about to make certain statements, and he was confident that both the Attorney General and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight would agree with the truth of the statement he advanced and with the deductions to be made from that statement. But he regretted to say that in making that statement—which he

would presently do—the House would see that this particular Bill was certainly not all that it should be. He did not wish that anyone should imagine that he was going against the decision of the arbitrators. Before he sat down he thought he should have shown that this Bill as it stood did not carry out the results of the arbitration. It was difficult for him in his position to avoid mentioning the theories and even the facts that had come to his knowledge officially, but at the same time he thought it was his duty, in the interest of a maritime industry connected with the Canadian Dominion, which he believed in the future as in the present would be of inestimable value to them in the Pacific, and to the seafaring populations on the western shores of Canada, to draw attention to certain faults in the Bill. First, in addition to the acknowledgment made by the Attorney General to the French nation, he would on behalf of himself and those with him cordially thank the United States for the great and liberal hospitality extended to them while they were there so many months. This hospitality took place not only at Washington, but up in the wilds of the Behring Sea, and was heartily appreciated by those who received it. This Bill, in dealing with principles, he must first of all point out—in addition to what the Attorney General had said—bore an incorrect title. The title “The Behring Sea Award Bill,” as the Attorney General stated, was wrong in the matter of geographical area, because the particular portion of the award it dealt with was not confined to the Behring Sea. The matters referred to arbitration were five in number, and the award of the arbitrator was given on those five points. A Bill called “The Behring Sea Award Bill” necessarily should be a Bill dealing somehow or other with those awards, but this measure did not touch any one of them. And perhaps he might here say that no one appreciated more than he did the splendid work done by the Attorney General and his colleague, the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight, in Paris, where they had to fight America on those five points. The victory won there was no doubt due partly to the brilliant work these gentlemen did, but greatly to the correct and careful and elaborate manner in which the case was prepared. But, as he said,

the Bill did not in any way refer to any one of the five points of the Award. The Award was given with regard to exclusive jurisdiction, and right of property in fur seals. The Bill did not touch one of these points of the Award. It merely sought to carry out a contingent decision of the arbitrators, who were requested in the terms of the Treaty under certain conditions to propose "Regulations for the proper protection and preservation of the fur seal." But a very cursory glance at the first Schedule of the Bill, in which was contained the principle of the measure—for the clauses were to enact that first Schedule—or a glance at any one of the clauses of the Bill, would show that the Bill was the very reverse of one for the proper protection and preservation of fur seals. The facts he should adduce in evidence would not be many. They were well-known both to the Attorney General and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight. In the first place, on the Preamble, he would call attention to the fact that it had been stated distinctly that the Regulations which followed were the Regulations approved by only four out of the seven arbitrators, and the three arbitrators who disagreed were gentlemen who had personal and national knowledge of the subject—that was to say, the gentlemen representing the United States and Canada. It would not be right, on his part, to go into detail in regard to the Articles of the Award; but he would briefly, on each of them, point out how it was that they would not result in a proper protection of the fur seal. The first Article spoke of a 60-mile zone around the Pribyloff Islands inclusive of the territorial waters; but every naval man knew that a zone at sea could only be effectually defined by lines of latitude and longitude. In Article 2—and here came the *gravamen* of his charge—they were told that the close season in which seals were not to be taken was to be from the 1st of May to the 31st of July. All the evidence that had been accumulated—and here he would remind hon. Gentlemen who took any interest in the financial affairs of the country that large sums of money were spent in collecting evidence on behalf of this country—proved conclusively that the only damage done and the only gratuitous destruction done at sea

to fur seals was done at that period of the year when, owing to the necessities of the case—owing to the natural history of the case, so to speak—the greater portion of the seals taken at sea were females heavy with young. That—from all considerations of humanity as well as economy—if they wished to protect the animals at all, was a period at which they certainly ought to protect the fur seal. What did they find in the Regulations? They found, according to the statistics in the Blue Book, that the period at which this slaughter of females heavy with pups took place was early in the year, ceasing in the beginning of May, but they found under the Regulations that sealers were not only allowed but stimulated, encouraged, to take seals at that particular period—the only period when it was known that they did damage to the seal herd. He knew that this point—that of taking female seals in that condition—was a point which the sealers themselves—those excellent seamen who pursued the seal at sea—were anxious to avoid. It was recorded in the Blue Book that the sealers themselves, in considering a close time, urged that it should be earlier, covering this most destructive period. Yet they were insisting, right in the face of this evidence, that the close time should be such as to compel the men to go to sea and kill seals when they ought not to be killed. This was a matter which would attract the sympathy and attention of all those who, like himself, were supporters of the wholesale movement which had been so great during the present century against cruelty to animals. Article 3 was a useful Regulation in providing that only sailing vessels should be employed, but it did not cover other vessels—whalers, traders, and cod-fishers. The same remark applied to Article 4. As to Article 5, it had been proved over and over again that it was difficult to discriminate between the sexes of seals, and yet the Regulation required that the sex should be entered in the log book. Article 6 was a remarkable Regulation. It said shot guns might be used outside, but not inside, the Behring Sea, which was a ridiculous stipulation. If the use of shot guns was bad outside the Behring Sea, it was bad inside; and to say, therefore, that they might be used outside but not inside was to bring ridicule on the Regulation. As to Article 7, it was

provided that the two Governments were to take measures to control the fitness of the men engaged in the fishery. He did not know what "to control the fitness" meant. The Regulation went on to say—

"These men shall have been proved fit to handle with sufficient skill the weapons by means of which this fishing may be carried on."

In other words, these men were not to be allowed to go into the water until they had learned to swim. They must be proved to be efficient in the management of boats and in the handling of weapons, results which could only come by actual experience. Article 8 was one which he hoped would receive the careful attention of all those who were interested in the rights of aboriginal races. Certain Indian races were to be left, within defined limits, to hunt the fur seals, but numerous other natives who had from time immemorial earned their livelihood by catching fur seals on the shores of Alaska were to be prevented from hunting in future. Article 9 was one for which he was not aware of any precedent. It said that these concurrent Regulations should remain in force until they had been modified by common agreement between the two Governments, so that neither Government could change or denounce the Regulations without the consent of the other. He knew of no precedent in any Treaty for such an arrangement. The concluding clause said that these Regulations should be submitted every five years for examination by the two Governments, but there was no provision to refer any dispute to arbitration. So that this first Schedule, as drawn, was distinctly and clearly unworkable, and would, he believed, prove destructive to the industry it sought to preserve. As he had said before, he did not wish to interfere with the decision of the Arbitrators, but he thought he had said enough to show there were great objections to these Regulations formulated in the Bill. So much for the acts of commission of the Government in the Bill. He would now, very briefly, deal with their acts of omission which still further militated against the particular value of these proposals. The first point he would urge was this: The Arbitrators had gone outside their instructions under the Treaty by interfering with the jurisdictional

rights of the United States in territorial waters, and yet they omitted to recognise that no Regulations for the preservation of the fur seal could be effectual unless they covered all modes of slaughter, especially those on shore. There was no case in the world where the fur seal had been destroyed to an extent approaching to extermination except by slaughter on shore, and yet these Regulations did not refer to the necessity for any limits on shore. That he considered to be a grave act of omission if they had genuinely at heart the preservation of the fur seal. Then, there were two other grave omissions. There was no provision in the Act to control sealers of other nations or sealers of these nations flying other flags, and rendering entirely nugatory even the miserable provisions of the Bill. That, he was sure, was a matter which the Arbitrators would have taken up had it been pointed out to them. Then, there was no clause providing that the contracting parties should agree to co-operate in securing the adhesion of other Powers to the Regulations. The Solicitor General said that they could not do that in an Act of Parliament; but, at the same time, there were clauses in innumerable Acts of Parliament to the effect "that the Act is subject to the adhesion of other Powers." Another point of omission was this: He had asked that day whether the United States Bill was identical with the one now before the House, but the only answer he received was that the Attorney General had seen the United States proposals in a somewhat detailed form, and there were no substantial differences. He considered it was a grave omission that the present Bill did not contain a provision that it should take effect only on the passing by the United States of a measure identical in its terms with the present Bill. These were his objections to the Bill; but, as he had said, he did not wish to stand in the way of or do anything which would militate against the success of the Award. It might be said that the defects which he had pointed out were the fault of the wording of the Treaty, which made it impossible for the Arbitrators to lay down any other Regulations. This evil could have been easily obviated had proper steps been taken to bring the Arbitrators to see that their deliberations could not, under the clause, issue in proper Re-

gulations for the protection of the seals. He asserted that occasions did arise before, during, and after the Arbitration, when negotiations might have been opened which would have obviated the difficulty in which they now found themselves. If they examined the Blue Books they would see that the Foreign Minister of the United States, as long ago as June 21, 1891, suggested that if the Arbitrators found the duty cast upon them of issuing Regulations, they should consult experts before issuing them; but that point was neglected, so far as he could make out, in all recent negotiations. If experts who were acquainted with seal life and the conditions of seal hunting had been consulted, a Code would have been devised which would have had the result of really protecting the fur seals. He hoped he had not troubled the House at too great length. He thought it necessary to stand up and explain what a somewhat close personal acquaintance and sympathy with the men who conducted the fisheries had resulted in in his mind. He was speaking not only of the desire of our Canadian fellow-countrymen, but of the men in the United States who controlled the fisheries in the Pribyloff Islands; and they, one and all, wished to see the fur seal race protected and the industry continued. He thought, when they passed a measure of this kind, that they ought to have Regulations which would practically effect that object. Before he sat down he wished to bring one other argument before the House, and it was one of great importance. This Bill differentiated between two portions of the North Pacific Ocean. The fur seal fed and bred in all portions of that ocean. They were legislating for half of that ocean and leaving out the other half—namely, the feeding and breeding places which belonged partly to Russia and partly to Japan. In any measure of this kind, the object of which was to secure an industry and an interesting tribe of natural history from extermination, this consideration ought to have been taken into account. Immediately on the cessation of the arbitration in Paris negotiations ought to have been not only opened but carried through to bring the other Powers into conference for the settlement of a Code of Regulations, which could have been perfectly easily devised, and which would once for all have secured the preservation

of the industry. In some respects the Regulations that had been made were almost inhuman, and they were certainly defective and inadequate. He was told that a Bill similar to this was being adopted in the United States, and that the great Canadian Dominion had no objection in principle to this Behring Sea Bill. If he found that this were the case he would raise no objection to the passing of the Bill, but he intended as soon as it was passed to do his best in the interest of the sealing industry, and he might also say in the interest of the fur seal, so to modify and improve the Regulations that they would secure the real protection and preservation of the fur seal.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, that in many respects hon. Members were in an inadequate position to discuss this Bill. In the first place, they did not know what corresponding Bill the United States had introduced into their Legislature. The Attorney General (Sir C. Russell) had stated that the United States Bill broadly corresponded with ours, but of course the matter was one of highly technical and complicated detail. In the next place, hon. Members were entirely unaware of the view that Canada took in the matter. Canada was far more directly and immediately interested in it than any of the inhabitants of these islands. It was the hardships suffered by and the illegalities put upon the inhabitants of Canada that first led to the raising of the question, and he thought it unfortunate that the House should be called upon to read the second time a Bill affecting mainly and principally the inhabitants of Canada without knowing in the least, beyond what appeared from the general statement of the Under Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton) whether the Canadian people took the same view of the Bill as they took of the *modus vivendi* of 1891. No Member of the House would be undesirous of doing what in him lay to arrive at the conclusion of a proper agreement with the United States. Again, Members found themselves under a great disability, because many of them did not feel themselves at liberty to enter very fully into the Regulations laid down by the Arbitration Tribunal. Power was given to the Arbitrators to make Regulations, and, that being so, Members were

almost entirely estopped from criticising their real merits. The Bill, however, could not be passed without some remarks being made on the events which had led to its introduction. He warned the House last year that the arbitration was certain to go against England. It was said, forsooth, that it had been entirely in favour of England, so it had as regarded the shadow, but not as regarded the substance. The first important point decided by the Arbitrators was that the United States had no exclusive jurisdiction outside the territorial limits of the United States. It required no tribunal to decide that question. It was of the commonplaces of the Law of Nations. The Solicitor General would have settled the question in five minutes. It was also decided as a natural consequence that they also had no property in or right of protection for the fur seal outside those limits. That was the end of the question, because if the United States had no jurisdiction and no rights all the claims that had been advanced on behalf of the Canadian sailors were justified. Having, however, settled that there was no jurisdiction and that there were no rights, the Commissioners proceeded to create a new jurisdiction and new rights, and to make the United States and Great Britain joint guardians of them. Having given to England the whole of the abstract right, they took away from her the whole of the concrete seal. Having given us the shadow, they handed over the substance to the United States. He found no fault with the Arbitrators; the fault lay in the terms of the Reference to them. The questions proposed to them were the questions proposed by Mr. Blaine, haggled over by Lord Salisbury, and finally accepted in their entirety on behalf of England. They were questions which could not but lead to the result that had been achieved. There seemed to be a fatality about all these arbitrations. The San Juan boundary question was an instance in point. The Treaty said that the frontier should pass through the middle of the Channel, but the right channel was excluded from the purview of the arbitrator, for he was called on to decide which of two wrong channels was the right one. There were other cases in which the wrong question had been submitted to the arbitrator. He was not going to apportion the blame;

the errors were due to the way in which our foreign affairs were considered and administered, and the absence of proper management. There seemed to be an unvarying fatality in all references by Great Britain to International arbitration. He hoped hon. Members opposite would see that that was largely due to the want of a permanent Committee on Foreign Relations, which was the great security for the protection of foreign interests and the continuity of policy in relation to foreign affairs in the United States. There was one point which he was not able to understand in regard to the Bill, and that was the delay which had taken place in its introduction, which necessitated the consequent hurry in which they had to pass it. The Award of the arbitrators was made on the 15th August of last year. They knew that last year the House was sitting long after the 15th of August, and he was unable to understand why, in a matter of this kind, and when the Government knew it was necessary to come to a conclusion at an early date, there should have been this delay. This Bill deprived the subjects of Her Majesty of certain rights on the high seas, and disposed of—and some people said it destroyed—the rights and interests of some of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects as well. Were the Canadians going to agree to this destruction of their interests, or were they going to claim compensation from this country? It appeared to him that they would be called upon to vote something on account of this monopoly which was being created, and so be really subsidising the Alaska Company. This Bill did not only absolutely abolish the liberty of the Queen's subjects on the high seas; but it did worse, and enacted that by the euphemism of the "Queen in Council," which simply meant a clerk in the Foreign Office, or an official at the Board of Trade, these Regulations could be repealed, and an end put to the Act; and practically, therefore, when they had passed the Second Reading of this Bill, it would be one that could be put an end to by some person outside that House. For what reason was this to be done? They were told that the so-called Regulations were being made in the interests of humanity, and for the protection of the seals. A great deal of false sentiment had been expended upon the killing of seals in these seas. Where

was the sentiment with regard to the monstrous cruelties, the horrible cruelties, perpetrated day by day upon thousands of seals on the Pribyloff Islands, which were left entirely outside the protection supposed to be enforced by this Act, and where the over-driving of seals was customarily practised. It was not in the interests of humanity that this Act was to be passed, nor was it in the interests of the American citizen, but merely in the interests of the Commercial Company, formerly the Alaska Company, which had the exclusive right of sealing on the islands—one of the most monstrous monopolies that every disgraced the face of the earth, and against which American citizens themselves protested. If they were to pay yearly compensation in the form of Votes by the House to Canadian fishermen, it would be in order to repay them for what the Alaska Company had taken from them. They would, therefore, practically be putting this money into the pockets of the Alaska Company, and taxing the English people for the benefit of this Company. After all that was done, what had we achieved? We were to be taxed in order that the Government might subsidise the monstrous Alaska Company, and this country and the United States were to prohibit British and American subjects from sealing between latitude 35°, which was about the latitude of Mexico, and the North Pole. But what about other nations? As was pointed out by Mr. Blaine himself, the two countries had absolutely no control over them. Hon. Members who did not appreciate the importance of the subject might smile; those who did would not. He would read an extract from the Correspondence.

"The Company respectfully submits that it is not competent for Great Britain and the United States alone to declare what subjects shall be permitted to navigate those waters or fish in the high seas."

Lord Salisbury pointed out, and Mr. Blaine himself admitted, that one of the objections to the arbitration arrangement was that whatever might be agreed to we had no power to bind other nations. True, Mr. Blaine also said he did not expect the other nations would go there to seal, but perhaps they would think it worth their while, when they found that the Canadians and Americans were prohibited from doing so, to take a voyage, kill seals, and come back

with them round Cape Horn. British and American subjects having been prohibited, the seal-fishing was left open to the rest of the civilised world. Then the Regulations were so loosely drawn that it was difficult to understand them. The first forbade the killing, capturing, or pursuing of seals within a zone of 60 miles of the Pribyloff Islands; but was the distance to be measured from a central point or from some extremity? Were the Islands themselves within the zone? Was it intended to forbid the clubbing of seals on the Islands? What was a zone? What were the limits? Take the Torrid Zone; there you have two limits.

*MR. SPEAKER said, the hon. Member was hardly treating the subject in a proper manner.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES was only showing how loosely these Regulations were drawn. He supposed the Americans intended to retain the right of killing seals on the Islands, yet the loose language rather implied the contrary. Those were reasons sufficient for asking the House to reject the Bill; but since the matter had been submitted to arbitration under unfortunate conditions, and the word of England was pledged, the House had no choice but to pass the Bill; and there was no people for whom he would more cheerfully make a sacrifice than for our kith and kin across the Atlantic. Although subjects of difference might arise from time to time between the two countries, the people of our own race would always be found by our side, and should any peril ever menace the old country he believed that the voice of blood would not be heard in vain in the new. For that reason, though a considerable sacrifice had been made by England, he was willing it should be made in favour of our kinsmen beyond the sea.

SIR R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I had hoped that my task would have been confined to expressing my concurrence with the admirable statement of the Attorney General; but it is absolutely impossible for me to permit the two speeches made on this side of the House to pass without comment. I trust that the House will not regard their criticisms and expressions of opinion as representing those of the Party with which they are associated. Before proceeding further I desire to join in the

Mr. Gibson Bowles

tribute paid by the Attorney General to the late Lord Hannen. Only those who, like myself, were present from day to day during the arbitration can have any proper appreciation of the ability and dignity displayed by Lord Hannen, one of the most distinguished Judges and jurists, from the beginning to the end, as a Member of that great International Tribunal. As to the criticisms of my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkdale, who possesses very extensive technical knowledge on this subject, I cannot but think that, upon consideration, my hon. Friend will feel that he has not made a very wise use of that knowledge. What is our position? It is that we are bound to carry out the undertaking of our country to a friendly nation. We agree that we ought to abide by the decision of the arbitrators and pass whatever legislation is necessary to give effect to the decision of the arbitrators. It does not, then, seem the time or place to criticise the wisdom of the arbitrators. It is our duty, both in law and honour, to see that legislation is passed which will give effect to that decision.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I hope there is no desire to misrepresent me, but those are the very words I have used.

SIR R. WEBSTER: It is because I think that my hon. Friend does not quite appreciate his criticisms that I say he will acknowledge on reflection that his criticisms are slightly out of place. The questions raised are questions of International Law. There is no provision which the mind of man can suggest which will enable these declarations to be embodied into an Act of Parliament.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: That is what I said.

SIR R. WEBSTER: I understood my hon. Friend to say that the Bill is not satisfactory because it does not carry out the Award and because there is no reference to the five questions. How is it possible to put into a Bill a declaration that the United States have no claim to Behring Sea? It would be not only unnecessary, but extremely unwise, and I must conscientiously say that it is very inconvenient such observations should be made in the House of Commons about this decision before it has been put upon its trial. No one can deny that this is a question which

is surrounded by difficulties. It is said that the Canadians have cause to complain of these Regulations. What is the position in which Great Britain is placed? Both nations are anxious for the preservation of the fur seal, and to prevent seal hunting, which would be disastrous. There are no people to whom that is of more importance than to the sealers of Canada. My hon. Friends are very severe because the arbitrators did not provide for interfering with the United States action upon the Pribyloff Islands themselves. But that is absolutely impossible. No nation would submit to the arbitration of foreign nations with regard to the laws they make within their own territory. It has escaped the hon. Members for Kirkdale and King's Lynn that, inasmuch as the decision can only be applicable to the high seas, the arbitrators are expressly of opinion that it should be supplemented by Regulations operating within the sovereignty of the two Powers who are parties to the agreement. Any suggestion, therefore, that the Regulations should be so framed as to enable the Canadians to carry on the sealing would be disastrous indeed, and one which could not for a moment enter into the mind of a person who has the real object of the arbitration in view, so far as the preparation of Regulations is concerned. Both my hon. Friend on this side of the House and hon. and learned Friends of mine in the Press have been exceedingly severe upon me because the Regulations of the arbitrators have not provided for interfering with the United States action in the matter. It is absolutely impossible that any nation can submit to the arbitration of foreign nations as to what laws they should make in their own territories. We can only appeal to the good sense and the good feeling of the United States. Neither with regard to the United States nor British territorial waters can it enter into the contemplation of anybody in the course of these negotiations that the arbitrators should have power to prescribe any laws which should be enforced either by Great Britain or the United States in their own territory. So thoroughly did the arbitrators themselves appreciate this that they pointed out that the Regulations could only be applicable to the high seas. They expressed the opinion that the Regula-

tions should be supplemented by others applicable within the limits of the sovereignty of each of the two Powers, and that these should be settled by agreement. My hon. Friend has said that the 60 miles zone is an absurdity, because, in the first place, it includes territorial waters. Does my hon. Friend remember that British subjects have no right to kill seals within territorial waters, and, therefore, by excluding British subjects from killing seals within territorial waters they have only re-declared the law? The real fact is that the Regulations are concerned with sealing on the seas, and accordingly the distance within which pelagic sealing will have to be restricted is 60 miles. It has been proved beyond all doubt or question that from 90 to 95 per cent. of pelagic sealing is done at a distance of 100 to 150 miles from the Islands. That is a zone to which there can be no reasonable objection. It would be a most unfortunate thing if people outside this House, or our Canadian brethren, thought that the Regulations were likely to be worked unjustly to them. I believe that when the Regulations have been fairly tried and tested it will be found that they offer a reasonable solution of what is admittedly a most difficult question. In saying this, I do not in any way wish it to be understood that I regard them as perfect, or that they will not require amendment or modification. I have said publicly—and I am prepared to stand by what I have said—that this settlement bears the mark of the great thought and consideration that have been given to every section of it. I feel most confident that it will to a very large extent meet the evil of the wanton destruction of seals which now exist, and which both nations are most desirous to put an end to. The United States at first insisted on far more stringent Regulations than the settlement as it is now drawn up contained. But they admitted that the tribunals were satisfied that less stringent Regulations than those they had laid down at first would attain the object desired by both nations. It has been stated that the shadow has been given to Great Britain and the substance to the United States. That is unquestionably an utter misrepresentation of the result of the Award, having regard to primary claims which the United States made

and what had really been decided. In the first place, there was a most substantial claim put forward by the United States to seize British vessels, and to confiscate their cargo and imprison their crews. My hon. Friend has said that everybody who knew the least little bit about International Law knew perfectly well what was the proper position of each nation. The Rules that govern the case are clearly set out by Grotius and every writer on International Law since his day, and, of course, everybody knows the works of that distinguished writer and historian perfectly. No one would doubt the great ability of Mr. Justice Hartmann, of the Supreme Court of the United States. Both he and the other American representative, a lawyer of great eminence, entirely concurred in the finding of the two arbitrators in favour of Great Britain and Canada. The statements which hon. Members have made in the House of Commons, that there is nothing in the finding in favour of Great Britain, would not be, I do not hesitate to say, endorsed hereafter when this decision comes to be referred to. The hon. Member for King's Lynn said that in the matter of Regulations the substance was also given to the United States, and that the whole of this legislation was for the purpose of bolstering up the monopoly of the Alaska Company. When I heard the paragraph read from the Blue Book by the hon. Member I interrupted and asked for the date, and the reply was March, 1887. This was seven years ago, and five years before the Treaty, when, as is known, there were parties in the United States who were hostile to the interests of the Alaska Company. The importance, however, of the position is this—that the United States has concurred with Great Britain in agreeing that the Regulations decided by the tribunal should be binding on the citizens of the United States just in the same way as Great Britain had agreed that these Regulations should be binding on the subjects of the Queen. The consequence is that it is not in accordance with a fair judgment of this matter to contend that these Regulations, which were less than the United States asked for, and not as liberal as I and my hon. Friend contended for on behalf of Great Britain, and which went in the direction to a large extent of securing

seal life, would not achieve the object which Great Britain and the United States contemplated when the Treaty was first entered into. My hon. Friends are anxious that the United States should be induced to curtail the killing of seals on the Pribyloff Islands. It is obvious that the framers of the Regulations saw that the two nations ought to be left in a position wherein they would have something to deal with and to make a bargain with, so that in the event of further concessions made by Great Britain in the interests of the protection of the seals the United States may also have inducements by such concessions to impose Regulations which would get rid of those practices followed on the Pribyloff Islands tending largely to the reduction of the number of seals. The hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool asked, "What do we know what has been done in the United States?" It appears to me to be somewhat strange that this observation should be made without a question having been addressed to Ministers. It is no part of my duty to defend Her Majesty's Government, but I am permitted, however, by the courtesy of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to say that the Bill of the United States has passed through the House of Representatives and the Senate, and is now law. The House has the assurance of the Attorney General that, having regard to the differences which must exist, substantially the legislation of the United States is based on the same lines as our own. It does not appear to me, therefore, to be right that the House should hesitate to pass this Bill, seeing that it is no more than this country is bound to do in order to implement the Award. I invite the hon. Member for King's Lynn, who appears to regard the carrying out of this statute as a perfunctory act of some official in a Department—such as a Board of Trade clerk—and not a matter of high policy, to look at the clauses of the Bill, and he will see that power is reserved to the Executive Government for the purpose of placing Great Britain in a better position if it should be necessary. The maximum penalty or restrictions that can be imposed on British subjects are a part of the Bill, but the Executive Government will advise Her Majesty to suspend or

modify the Regulations to which objection has been taken in favour of British subjects. I think I have now noticed most of the points mentioned by my hon. Friends, and, in thanking the House for the attention they have paid to me, I would say that I believe, apart from any indirect or direct benefit, the gain, so far as the seals themselves are concerned, are great; and that the Treaty and the Act of Parliament making the provisions of the Treaty law are a distinct advance in the settlement of International disputes. The conclusion of the speech of the Attorney General in addressing the Paris tribunal was specially worthy of perusal. My hon. and learned Friend pointed out that the questions involved were not merely questions as to the conduct of sealing, but as to whether the nations should more and more feel pledged to settle their disputes by agreement if possible, and, if not, by arbitration, instead of resorting to those dreadful methods which after all never settle anything, and only leave heartburning on one side or the other. I am sorry that the speeches of some hon. Members should have made it necessary for someone to point out to the House and to the country the true position of affairs. I hope that to a large extent I have satisfied their misgivings. But I am certain that this Award will be regarded as a monument of what can be done by fair argument towards settling International disputes, and there is nothing in the whole course of my career on which I shall look back with greater pride than the fact that I have been associated with the Attorney General in this great event.

*MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said that, as the person who brought the matter prominently before the public in 1888, he wished to congratulate this country and the United States on having been able to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. The whole matter had been thoroughly discussed on behalf of all concerned. While he congratulated those who were engaged in the case upon the spirit in which it had been conducted there was one matter to which he must call attention. It was with the greatest regret that he found that the zone round the Pribyloff Islands had been extended to 60 miles. A zone of 12 miles would have been quite suffi-

cient to protect the nursing seal. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining observations in the Behring Sea sometimes for a week together, it was often impossible for a vessel to know whether she was 20 or 60 miles from any particular point; and this would be the cause of interminable disputes. There were some other Regulations which pressed hardly on the sealers, who were a most deserving body of men; but, with these exceptions, he endorsed what had been said by his hon. and learned Friend.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND).

RESOLUTION. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [2nd April]—

"That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by Order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee :

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged :

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee."—(*Sir G. Trevelyan*.)

And which Amendment was, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"This House declines to sanction, in regard to Bills relating to one portion only of the United Kingdom, any plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of Committees of this House shall be fundamentally altered until it has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon a general scheme which shall extend a like treatment to Bills relating to each of the other portions of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour*.)

Question again proposed,

"That the words 'in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

Mr. Staveley Hill

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth) said, he had feared that the resumption of the Debate would be postponed so late that he should have to thank Her Majesty's Government for suspending the Twelve o'Clock Rule in order that his speech might not be interrupted a second time. He had pointed out that among the Scotch Members there were those who did not by education or training represent Scotland, but only the particular constituencies to which they had been elected; and therefore a Committee of Scotch Members would include some whose authority on Scotch affairs was inferior to that of others who were excluded. For instance, there were the two distinguished English lawyers on the other side, the Home Secretary and the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Birrell), both born and educated in England, and both representing Scotch constituencies. If they wanted to find real representatives of Scotland—representatives of the great Scotch names of Stuart and Macdonald—one must go to the Tower Hamlets and Shoreditch, and when they had discovered these gentlemen they would probably find them, as upon that night, very active in endeavouring to prevent the people of London from having a proper supply of water. To establish a system of Grand Committees on the principle that those who knew most of the subject to be dealt with should be included, the suggested arrangements would have to be altered. Then, what effect would the establishment of this Scotch Committee have on the composition of the other Grand Committees? No Scotch Member would be able to serve on the Grand Committee on Trade or the Grand Committee on Law, because the duties would clash. Moreover, he ought not to serve on those Committees, even if he were able. The principle laid down by the right hon. Member for East Denbighshire was a true principle, though it carried the right hon. Member further than he realised. The right hon. Member said that if Scotch Members sat on this Scotch Committee they ought not in reason to claim to be represented on other Committees; and the consequence would be that every Scotch Member's name must be struck off those Committees. Then there were Bills concerning the affairs of England

only which were referred to Select Committees. It would be the absolute duty of English Members to take care, if this Scotch Committee were established, to resist every proposal to allow any Scotch Member to sit on any Committee to which an English Bill was referred. He did not look forward with satisfaction to any such innovation upon the Constitution of the Committees of that House, but he maintained that that would be the natural and necessary consequence of the separate proposals which the Government had put before them. If they were to have the Scotch Committee constituted in this way, and if they were to have these corresponding changes in the other Committees, he wished to ask the Government what was their reason for proposing these changes. Let it be supposed that this new Scotch Committee was constituted, and that there had been referred to it some measure exclusively relating to Scotland. If that measure were absolutely non-contentious and did not raise any of the political controversies which were to be found in Scotland as well as in this country, he admitted that such a Bill might pass through the Committee without difficulty. But such a Bill would pass through any of the ordinary Grand Committees of the House with equal facility. But if the Bill partook of another character and involved matter of political antagonism, what would be gained by referring such a measure to this Scotch Committee? If such a Bill were referred to an ordinary Grand Committee representing in a smaller area, but in due proportion, the different sections of the House, the House would, of course, accept the decision of the Committee. But supposing that the Bill were referred to the proposed Scotch Committee, which had not the advantage of representing all sections of the House, and supposing the views of the minority were overborne by the vote of the majority, was it to be supposed that the minority would not appeal to the House against the decision of the majority? Therefore, at the Report stage of the measure every controversial question would be raised again and discussed in the House, with the result that the whole time that had been occupied in considering the Bill in Committee would be entirely wasted. If that were

the case he should like to ask Her Majesty's Government how far their present proposal was a practical one, and how far it was likely to conduce to the forwarding of the business of the House? He, however, did not think that he could attribute to the Government any desire to increase the speed of general legislative work in that House, or to relieve the House from any of the difficulties which the present Rules of Procedure imposed upon it. It was only the other evening that the Government had used their influence and had employed their Whips to defeat a proposal to inquire what means could be devised for expediting the business of the House. It must therefore be assumed that the Government had no real desire to secure that object in making this proposal. What, then, could be the object of the Government in sacrificing one of the golden weeks of their Session in discussing this proposal? They would have to obtain from the House a specific sanction for the reference of that Bill to the Scottish Committee, so that they would not be at the end of their labours when they had succeeded in passing the Resolution through the House. But let him suggest this to them also, that on the question of the time it would take to get Scottish legislation through they had to take into account, first, the time it took to pass this Resolution; secondly, the time, in regard to the reference of any Bill to any Standing Committee, in discussing the question of the exclusion of the Scotch Members from the Committee, the time that would be taken up for referring Bills to the Scotch Committee, and, lastly, the time that would be occupied in the appeal that would be made from the Scotch Committee to the House. When these matters were considered the Government would find that from the point of view of business their proposal was extremely unwise. They would find that it would cost a great deal more time than it was likely to save them in dealing with Scottish business. But there was just one other matter he should like to refer to. This subject had been put before the House by the Secretary for Scotland in a modest speech in which he spoke of it as merely a means of dealing with the business of the House. But there had not only been that remarkable incident,

but there had been a Debate on Scotch Home Rule, and the Secretary for Scotland, who on Monday proposed the present Motion as a "practical and workmanlike measure," on the following evening gave himself the pleasure of supporting an unpractical and unworkmanlike measure—in which he had not the support of his Chief in the House and, so far as they knew, had not the support of his Chief in the Government—for giving Home Rule to Scotland. The sequence of the incidents was very interesting and curious. In his speech on Home Rule the Secretary for Scotland changed the position of this question from one merely of an arrangement of business into one of the existence of the Government. For he said—

"The Government were determined to carry the Grand Committee through as far as they could by every means they could employ, and by staking everything upon it."

It was a very curious situation that Parliament had been in during the present week. They all greatly regretted and sympathised with the cause which prevented the Leader of the House from being in his place to-night; but he hoped, in the right hon. Gentleman's absence, some one Member on the Treasury Bench would be good enough to supplement the speech which the Secretary for Scotland made on Monday evening, and tell them something in the way of explanation of the speech he made on Tuesday. It really looked as if there were two Parties on that Bench. They did not sit there at the same time, but some were in at one time and some at another. There was the Leader of the House, who did not vote in favour of Scottish Home Rule, and who, so far as they knew, was, like the head of the Government, not very enthusiastic about Home Rule at all. But there were two other Members who, having in their official capacity given their support to the "workmanlike, practical proposal" on the Monday, in a sort of unofficial capacity enjoying themselves in the absence of their Chief, on the Tuesday evening, took their share of the operation which he would not support, and voted in favour of Home Rule for Scotland. Surely they were entitled to know what it was that was the policy of the Government. Were they going in for Home Rule all round? [*Cries of "Yes!"*] There were some

sponsors, it appeared, ready to answer for the Government, but the Government were not inclined to answer so promptly for themselves. Home Rule for Ireland they accepted long ago for various reasons. The question of Home Rule for Scotland was at present only a subject out of which to extract amusement on a Tuesday evening. Was it to be an integral part of the policy of the Party they represented?

An hon. MEMBER: Yes.

SIR E. CLARKE: Somebody said "Yes"; he should think it was a Welshman. Gallant little Wales was only waiting its turn to claim a Parliament in some part of the Principality—after civil war, he should think, because it would require civil war to decide in what part of Wales that Parliament should be situated. Could they not know what it was the Government were proposing to do? If their policy was a policy of Home Rule all round; if they were gradually being led and pressed on to accept bit by bit that enormous policy, what possible excuse had they for occupying the time of the House of Commons by discussing proposals of the kind, and what excuse had they for not going with the Opposition to the masters of all of them—the people outside in the constituencies—and setting their proposals before them? They knew that to indulge in this policy of reticence and gradual acquiescence would be of no use. They knew that no scheme of Home Rule for either country could possibly pass into law until there had been a specific declaration of the people on the point. If that were so, it was right that they should make an appeal to the people. It was a pity for their own sake that they should waste time over the discussion of this proposal and over the solution of the many difficulties which its acceptance would bring upon them if they were meditating the adoption of a policy so much larger, and a policy that would absolutely swamp and obliterate the necessity for this. It might be that they had persuaded themselves that, while a Scottish Grand Committee would for certain purposes be a good thing, it would in their judgment be a better thing to have a Scottish Parliament in Scotland itself, and that the distinguished Scotchmen whom now

Sir E. Clarke

they were so glad to see on the Treasury Bench should take themselves to the North of the Tweed and occupy positions in a less important and even in a provincial Parliament; that might be their wish, but he thought the House was entitled to know it; and until the Government gave the House their plan and their policy on that point he thought he was entitled to point out to them that the proposal they had made to the House was one which would alter the whole system of Committee representation, which would introduce an entirely new principle of voting and estimating the position of the Members of the House, which would give the Government no advantage in non-contentious Scottish business, which would be rather a hindrance than an advantage on contentious Scottish Bills, and which could only result in a serious expenditure of the time of which they had none too much to spare, and which had not been supported in the House by any argument which could justify its acceptance.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) said, it might conduce to a saving of the time of the House if the discussion were brought back from the realms to which the imagination of gentlemen opposite had carried it into the business sphere embraced by the Resolution. They were not discussing Home Rule for Scotland, or anything that had anything to do with Home Rule. [*Opposition laughter.*] Of course, Members opposite laughed, but he thought they would probably admit that he knew more about the feeling of Home Rulers in Scotland than they did. He certainly said that if they (the Home Rulers) were offered this proposal as a substitute for what they intended to demand they would not take it. It had been said that some two or three years ago he described the proposal of a Scottish Grand Committee as a "peddling and pottering" proposal. He had only so described it as a substitute for Home Rule. He said it would be no substitute for Home Rule. It would be absolutely unworkable under certain circumstances, and it was put forward under present circumstances and in the present Session as a business proposal which would work perfectly well. It was more for the benefit of the House than of the Scotch Members, because certain business had to be got through, and whether

it was done in the time of the House or in the time of a Committee made very little difference to the Scotch Members individually. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had said that the proposal of the Government was a plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of the Committees of the House would be fundamentally altered. There were, however, no traditions concerning Grand Committees which had not yet been 10 years in existence. The constitution of Committees had been for very many years back not at all antagonistic to the vast preponderance of those belonging to the nationality concerned in a Bill. In 1878 a very contentious measure, the Sunday Closing (Ireland) Bill, was referred to a Select Committee. That Committee consisted of 12 Irish Members, the Irish Secretary, one Scotch Member—himself—and one English Member. What was that but a miniature Irish Grand Committee? Of course, it might be said that as this Committee was constituted for the purpose of collecting evidence it had a different function from that possessed by Scotch Grand Committees. A Scotch Committee was constituted on similar lines to consider the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill. Only a single English Member had a seat upon that Committee. The House was now asked to set up a Committee which would be in entire accord with its ancient practice, as far as it was illustrated by the Committees to which he had alluded. That Committee would be in accord with the political views of Her Majesty's Government and their supporters. It would work perfectly well under the circumstances. The hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down had said that if the Grand Committee were set up Scotch Members must necessarily be excluded from other Grand Committees. Why should they be? There was nothing of the sort in the Resolution. The Committee of Selection had their instructions as to the Grand Committees on Trade and Law, and he supposed they would continue to follow them. Of course, Members could not be on two Committees at the same time, but did anyone imagine that all the Members of any Grand Committee were always present at the meetings of that Committee? As a matter of fact, the difficulty in many

cases was to get a quorum. It was said that if a Scotch Grand Committee were appointed, a Welsh Committee and an English Committee would also have to be set up. There was nothing about that in the Resolution. A Scotch Committee had been asked for repeatedly by the Scotch Members, but the Welsh Members had never asked for a Welsh Committee. The reason was obvious. The Welsh Members were going to occupy a large portion of the time of the Session by the discussion of a Bill which could not be referred to a Welsh Committee, inasmuch as it concerned England as well as Wales. As to the English Members there had never been heard a word of any possibility of such a demand being made by them until it was brought forward to prevent the Scotch Members getting what they wanted. It was said that the proposal would not effect any saving of time, because whenever a minority were beaten in the Grand Committee they would appeal to the judgment of the House. Did any Member who was not absolutely unsophisticated and unused to the wiles of the House not know that whenever there was a chance of a minority overturning the verdict of a majority they appealed to the whole House on the Report, but did anyone imagine that in the case of a contentious Bill which had gone before a Grand Committee anything would be gained by a long discussion on the Report? He thought that the adoption of the Grand Committee system would result in the saving of a very large amount of time that would otherwise be consumed in Committee of the whole House. No doubt under certain circumstances the system would not work. A national Committee of which the majority of Members were opposed to the Government of the day would certainly not work, inasmuch as the Government would be obliged to reverse the decisions come to in Committee. When he said the Resolution had nothing to do with Home Rule he was laughed at, but he asserted emphatically that it would never be considered as in any way removing a single ground on which the demand was made for Scottish Home Rule. Among the Scottish Members there was a large standing majority of Liberals, and when a Liberal Government was in power a Grand

Committee of such Members would work. When, however, a Conservative Government was in power, it would be impossible for a Scottish Grand Committee to work, and under such circumstances no one would want to appoint one. The Resolution, he was informed, only amounted to a Sessional Order, and he presumed that gentlemen opposite did not intend to cross the floor during the present Session. If and when they did cross the floor it would be for them to manufacture their own Standing Committee in such a way that they would facilitate the work of Parliament, and be consistent with the existence of a Conservative Government. When Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald was Lord Advocate he called a meeting of the whole of the Scotch Members in order to ascertain their views on a certain Bill, thus practically constituting a Scotch Grand Committee. The result was a great saving of the time of the House, although the Scotch Members gained nothing by it, because in the Lords all the Government Amendments objected to by the majority of the Scotch Members were inserted. The Scotch Members now wished for a Grand Committee, because they believed it would enable their business to be done more satisfactorily, as it would do away with the necessity of being content with odds and ends of time for their measures. They were willing to inflict greater labour upon themselves, and he did not see how anyone could object to that. As to taking the control of Scotch matters out of the hands of the House, that was an absurdity, inasmuch as all Bills would first be dealt with in the House that would be sent back to the House for the Report stage and Third Reading. Under these circumstances, he could not conceive how any fair-minded or impartial man could object to a proposal so moderate in its character. As to taking Scottish matters in any way outside the House, that was an absurdity. The Bill had to be ordered to go to the Committee, it had to come back here on Report, it had to go through the Third Reading. As well might they accuse a previous Conservative Government in appointing a Select Committee to consider Bills of going on to a Separatist route as accuse this Government of now making a proposal which had any tendency in that direction. He trusted they would discuss this matter on its merits, and

without reference to Scottish Home Rule. To show the spirit in which the Scottish Members had asked this scheme, he might mention he was the medium through which their resolution on this subject was conveyed to the head of the Government. The resolution ran thus—

"That pending the concession of Home Rule to Scotland we consider that it is hopeless to look for any Scottish business being got through, or that the hope is futile of any Scottish business being got through, unless we get such a Committee as it is proposed to appoint."

There was one direction in which he thought the right hon. Gentleman's (Sir G. Trevelyan) Resolution could be improved. That was to do away with the part of it providing for a Motion of reference in the case of every separate Bill, for that gave only another stage in which obstruction could take place, not at the cost of the Scotch Members only, but of the time of the House. He suggested that the right hon. Gentleman might, therefore, as well take this opportunity to improve the Resolution by adopting the Amendment of which notice had been given by his hon. Friend the Member for Caithness.

***LORD G. HAMILTON** (Middlesex, Ealing): I rise to move the Adjournment of this Debate. I have sat for 20 years in this House, and I will undertake to say that the oldest Member of the House never can recollect an occasion upon which the House has been treated with such scant courtesy as they have been now. After what has occurred during the last three days, the conduct of the Government is an outrage upon all the decencies of Debate. On Monday the Scottish Secretary made a proposal which reversed the whole principle on which from time immemorial the Committee —

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is a matter of argument.

LORD G. HAMILTON: Then why do not the Government argue it? On Monday the Scottish Secretary asked the House to assent to the novel and, to our mind, dangerous principle as regarded the constitution of Committees—that is to say, to substitute the principle on which they have hitherto been nominated of reflecting the general opinion of the House for the principle of nationality, and yet, when we are told this evening that this was done in order to satisfy the "deep-rooted convictions of the Scottish people," the only hon. Member who has

spoken to-night, on behalf of this proposal says that the great merit of the proposal is that it is a Sessional Order, and that if a Unionist Government came into power, he should not want this principle to continue. Then, on Tuesday we had the still more remarkable performance of the Scottish Secretary. He induced the House to accept the principle of Home Rule for Scotland—practically Home Rule all round. On the night preceding not one single Cabinet Minister attempted to take part in the discussion. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition made a speech which everybody must admit was worthy of reply. My right hon. Friend on Tuesday again followed the Scotch Secretary, and again he pointed out the utter absurdity and inconsistency of the position the Government have taken up with regard to Scotch business. To-night, again, my hon. and learned Friend the late Solicitor General has made a masterly speech, showing the inconsistency of the proposal, and how utterly unpractical and unworkable it would be; but in reply we have not had a single, solitary word from the Government. Her Majesty's Government either make this proposal seriously or they do not. Do they know their own mind? If they know their own mind, they are bound to communicate what is in their mind to the House. If they do not know their mind, then it is a farce and a sheer waste of time to go on with this Debate. We have a special right to insist on declining to go on with the discussion until the Government clearly tell us what they intend to do. It was by the courtesy of the Opposition that the Government were able to get through their business before Easter. They bring forward this proposal with the most inadequate explanation. The Minister who made that proposal changed his mind the next night. The Leader of the House had been absent on all occasions on Monday, Tuesday, and to-night. [Mr. J. MORLEY interpolated an explanation which did not reach the Reporters' Gallery.] I apologise. I was not aware until this moment of the cause of the right hon. Gentleman's absence to-night. No other Minister has attempted to take the right hon. Gentleman's place on any one of these occasions. Under these circumstances, what is the use of continuing the Debate? I therefore move the Adjournment, in the hope that when

the House meets again we may have a clear indication of what the Government intend; and when we have got that indication I hope they will adhere to it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Lord G. Hamilton.)*

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The noble Lord has given us one evidence to-night that he is of Scotch extraction, because he has no occasion to call on Providence to give him a good conceit of himself. For what is the noble Lord's argument in favour of adjourning the Debate? It is that one or two speeches which his colleagues have made on the subject have been so conclusive and unanswerable, and have remained so entirely unanswered, that it is no use attempting to discuss the matter further. ["No!"] What has happened? My right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland made on Monday on the part of the Government an explanation of the reasons—[a laugh]*—which may not have been satisfactory to the courteous gentleman who laughed—why the Government asked the House to agree to this Resolution. He was followed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. That was one speaker against one. In that evening's Debate the late Solicitor General for Scotland spoke and was answered by the Lord Advocate in a speech of great length. The next speech was that of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, who has concluded his remarks to-night. Therefore, the only complaint which the noble Lord can make is that no one has risen at once to reply to the late Solicitor General. I will admit the noble Lord into a secret. I intended to speak in this Debate, but I was anxious to know what certain other gentlemen had to say. From the beginning of the Debate it was understood on all hands that the right hon. Members for St. George's, West Birmingham, Bury, the University of London, and I do not know how many more illustrious Members of the Opposition, intended to take part in it. It was only right, therefore, that the Government should wait until some at least of that formidable artillery had been discharged before making any further interposition in the Debate. I deny the right of the noble Lord or any of his colleagues to dictate to Members

of the Government the manner in which we shall conduct our business. Then the noble Lord said that on Tuesday another Debate had been interposed, which altered the character and position of the Resolution now before the House. It would not be within the proper Rules of Debate for me, speaking on the Question of Adjournment, to discuss that matter; but I agree with my hon. Friend who has just previously spoken that the question raised on Tuesday had nothing whatever to do with the question now before the House, which is a proposal to adopt a Sessional Order which we think would be of advantage in expediting and facilitating Scotch business, and would also obtain a better expression and give better weight to Scotch opinion in matters affecting Scotland alone. The Motion on Tuesday was not a Government Motion, but was one of those Motions of private Members on Friday and Tuesday nights, upon which Governments frequently do not think it necessary or right to express an opinion one way or the other. The proposition of the noble Lord is that we should forthwith adjourn the Debate. I am not aware that there is any force in the argument which the noble Lord has adduced which ought to lead the House to adopt that course. I frankly admit that after so large a portion of the time of the House has been to-night so unexpectedly taken up by a lengthened discussion on Private Bills, that the situation is somewhat altered.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: On a Government night.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The Government have no control over the day on which Private Bills can be put down. Therefore, it is not the Government who fixed the day, but the supporters of the noble Lord, whose Bills they were.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: My Bills?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is the supporters of the noble Lord who can choose the particular day for the discussion of these measures. I freely own that seeing that so large a part of the time of the House was taken up by Private Bills we can hardly expect—especially if all those important gentlemen to whom I have referred are going to favour the House with their views at great length—to conclude this Debate to-night. But the idea of cutting

short the Debate before 12 o'clock—a Debate which has proceeded with perfect regularity and courtesy on the Ministerial side of the House—is a proposal to which the Government cannot possibly assent.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 232 ;
Noes 250.—(Division List, No. 16.)

Original Question again proposed,

“That the words ‘in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47’ stand part of the Question.”

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND : After the Division which has just taken place, the Government must see how useless it is to attempt to continue the Debate. Therefore I beg to move the Adjournment of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
“That this House do now adjourn.”—
(*Sir F. Dixon-Hartland.*)

MR. J. MORLEY : We are unable to assent to the Motion of the hon. Member. The noble Lord who moved the Motion before this said he had for a long time been a Member of this House, and in the name of the decencies of Debate he moved the adjournment of it. I have not been so long in this House as the noble Lord, but I venture to say, when I review the circumstances of to-night, that so great an outrage on the usages and proprieties of Debate in this House has never been witnessed as the attempt of hon. Gentlemen opposite at this moment under these circumstances to stop the Debate. [*Laughter.*] Let me remind hon. Gentlemen who laugh—perhaps they have not been in the House—of the circumstances. Owing to circumstances over which the Government had no control, it was impossible to renew the discussion of the Motion before the House until, I think, 25 minutes to 11. [Several hon. MEMBERS : A quarter to 11.] I was in the House all the night, and I think that is so. The hon. and learned Gentleman concluded his speech. He was followed by my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow ; and then, at 25 minutes to 12, because no Member on this Bench gets up of equal Parliamentary rank, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War has shown, to reply, we are denounced for outraging the decencies of Debate by the noble Lord. I can only repeat what I have said, that

if these tactics are to be persevered in they shall be persevered in, and persevered in long enough to mark them before the country.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : If I may judge from obvious signs the temperature of the House has risen to a very unnecessary pitch. I do not follow the reasoning of the right hon. Gentleman, whose anger is entirely thrown away upon the House at this late hour. I really would respectfully suggest that we should consider the situation in a spirit of calmness. What has happened is this : On Monday a Debate of very great importance, in the opinion of those on this side of the House, and one involving very grave issues of Parliamentary practice, was commenced by the Secretary for Scotland, in a speech which had many merits, but which amongst its merits had not the merit of discussing the question from a broad and Imperial point of view. We on this side tried to lay before the House certain arguments, with the object of showing that you could not deal with this as a measure relating to the Scotch measures alone. Perhaps feebly, I myself sought on Monday to put this view forward, and not only has no reply been made, but no reply has even been attempted. [*Ministerial cries of “The Lord Advocate.”*] I hear the Lord Advocate mentioned, and I have a profound respect for that right hon. and learned Gentleman. I have the honour also to belong to the same clan as he does. He is a lawyer of great experience, he is one of our old Parliamentary friends, and is equally respected by both sides of the House, but he would, I am sure, be the last one to get up in this House and contend that in his speech he had attempted to go beyond the purely Scotch aspect of this problem, or had endeavoured to touch the larger question which we have endeavoured to bring before the House. What the Lord Advocate has failed to do no other Member of the Government has even attempted to do. Nevertheless, my hon. and learned Friend (Sir E. Clarke), who began a speech on Monday which must have impressed everybody, concluded that speech to-night, and sat down at a time when it is usual and convenient that a Parliamentary authority of the first rank should reply, and yet no Minister rose to do so, and the hon. and learned Gentleman’s speech is left abso-

lutely unanswered by any responsible Member of the Government. The only endeavour to deal with that speech was made by an independent Scotch Member, who treated the subject from a purely Scotch point of view, and did not attempt to deal with the broad question. Have not the Opposition, therefore, even with some heat, the right to say that this is not the proper mode of treating a great question? That was the justification which my noble Friend had in moving the adjournment, and I suggest to the Government, even if they are disposed to take no further part in the Debate, even if they are anxious to rest their whole case on the speech of the Secretary for Scotland, that they should allow us to adjourn to-night until some other gentlemen may have an opportunity of laying their views before us. I hope before the resumption of the Debate the Government will have considered the subject, and will have discovered that it is not purely a Scottish question, but that it is of interest to England, Wales, and Ireland, and that some Minister will come forward and give us the views of the Government on the broader aspects which the question presents. We must all feel that we can hardly enter into one of these painful contests at this time of night, with Parties as evenly divided as they appear to be, with any prospect of bringing our discussion to a conclusion either creditable to the House or improving to the prospects of future legislation. Whether there was any heat before the late Division or not, that is all over now, and the time has come, I hope, when we may part with mutual goodwill, to meet again in a frame of mind suited to the discussion of what is, after all, a not unimportant Constitutional question.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 231; Noes 246.—(Division List, No. 17.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, the vote that had just taken place showed that the majority in favour of continuing the Debate was becoming smaller and smaller, and as it was admitted that the discussion must go over to another day, there was no object in carrying it further now. He therefore moved the adjournment of the Debate.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to second the Motion.

Mr. A. J. Balfour

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. Hanbury.)*

MR. J. MORLEY: If the interruption which has just now come to an end had not taken place—that is to say, if the noble Lord had not made his Motion for the adjournment five minutes less than an hour ago—gentlemen opposite would by this time have had their desire fulfilled and would have heard a Cabinet Minister, and we should have at this hour willingly consented to the adjournment of the Debate, and we should have avoided all that rise of temperature which the right hon. Gentleman opposite deprecated. It is not our fault that these desirable results have been missed. But, having regard to the hour, the Government will now no longer resist the adjournment of the Debate.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.—(No. 1.)

Reported with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 2.)

Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) BILL.—(No. 3.)

Reported with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

NOTICE OF ACCIDENTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill for providing for Notice of and Inquiry into Accidents occurring in certain employments and industries, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella, and Mr. Secretary Asquith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 144.]

GROCERS' LICENCES ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. David Thomas, Bill to abolish the retail sale of Spirits, Wine, and Beer by Shopkeepers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. David Thomas, Mr. Lloyd-George, Major Jones, Mr. Alfred Thomas, Mr. Whittaker, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham).

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 145.]

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 6th April 1894.

EAST LONDON WATER BILL.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, he wished to state on behalf of his hon. Friend the Member for St. George's-in-the-East (Mr. Benn), who had given notice of an Instruction to the Committee on the East London Water Bill, that after what had occurred on the previous day he did not intend to move it. He intended to reconsider the terms of the proposal, and to put it down on a later day.

QUESTIONS.

WELSH SCHOOL INSPECTORS.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh, &c.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if it is his intention to secure that in future appointments to the Government Inspectorate of Public Elementary Schools in Wales due consideration shall be given to the claims for promotion to such office possessed by the more experienced and highly qualified certificated teachers now at work in those schools; and whether it is his intention also to give similar consideration to the claims to promotion possessed by sub-Inspectors and by Inspectors' assistants now engaged in the work of inspection in the Public Elementary Schools in Wales?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham): I am always willing to give full consideration to all the claims or applications of those, whether certificated teachers or others, who desire to be made Inspectors, subject to the general conditions of age and the like, which are laid down by the Department. The answer to the second paragraph of the question is in the affirmative. I have already appointed two sub-Inspectors to be Inspectors.

STEAMSHIP ROUTES TO NEW YORK.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the number of sailing knots respectively in the routes of steamers as shown on the Admiralty charts, first

between New York and Liverpool *via* Queenstown, and second between New York and Liverpool *via* Moville; also the corresponding distances between the Ports of Halifax and Liverpool and Greenock *via* Moville?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) (who replied) said: According to information given to me by my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty, who has asked me to answer this question, the distances are as follows:—

	Nautical Miles.
New York to Liverpool <i>via</i> Queens- town—by usual route	3,070
Do. by shortest navigable route.....	3,016
New York to Liverpool <i>via</i> Moville— by usual route	3,100
Do. by shortest navigable route	2,990
Halifax to Liverpool <i>via</i> Moville—by shortest navigable route	2,450
Halifax to Greenock <i>via</i> Moville—by shortest navigable route	2,350

The shortest route may not be practicable at certain times of the year when ice abounds on the banks of Newfoundland; and the distances would then be considerably increased.

MAIL LANDING AT QUEENSTOWN AND MOVILLE.

SIR J. LENG: I beg to ask the Postmaster General on how many occasions the Atlantic mail steamers were unable from stress of weather to land the American and Canadian mails during the years 1892 and 1893 at Queenstown and Moville respectively?

MR. A. MORLEY: As regards Queenstown, the answer is five times in 1892 and twice in 1893. As regards Moville, I have already stated to the hon. Member that the Canadian Mail Service is performed under a Colonial, not an Imperial, contract, and that no records of its performance are kept at the General Post Office. I will, however, if the hon. Member wishes me to do so, endeavour to obtain the information and let him know the result of my inquiries.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): Is not the number of occasions on which stress of weather prevented the landing of the mails at Queenstown extremely small in proportion to the number of mails carried?

MR. A. MORLEY: My hon. Friend has the figures before him, and therefore can answer the question. No doubt the figures are very satisfactory.

INDIAN TROOPSHIPS.

MR. BAKER (Portsmouth): On behalf of my hon. Colleague in the representation of Portsmouth I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if it is in contemplation that Southampton, in place of Portsmouth, should in future be the port of embarkation and debarkation of troops going to and returning from India; and whether it is definitely settled that the Government troopships hitherto used for this service are to be laid aside?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): Three of the four Indian troopships will not run after the close of the present trooping season. The *Malabar* will continue to run from Portsmouth. Negotiations as to the future system of trooping for India are now proceeding between the Admiralty and India Office. Pending a decision on that subject temporary arrangements will be made for hired ships, which will probably be fitted at Southampton. The question whether that shall also be the port at which the hired ships will for the time embark troops is now under consideration.

LONDON BAKEHOUSES.

MR. BARROW (Southwark, Bermondsey): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of Dr. Waldo on the conditions under which a large proportion of the bakery business is being carried on in London; and whether the Local Authorities are impotent under the present law to enforce sanitary remedies; and, if so, will further legislation be introduced at the earliest possible opportunity to effect the object?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Report referred to by my hon. Friend is not an official Report, but a Paper read by Dr. Waldo at a meeting of the Sanitary Institute. It certainly discloses a very deplorable state of things. I may remind my hon. Friend that there are provisions in the existing Factory and Workshops Acts under which Sanitary Authorities can take action to put a stop to abuses which render bakehouses unfit for use. Till an attempt has been made by Sani-

tary Authorities to enforce these remedies and has failed I do not think it will be necessary to propose further legislation.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman cause inquiry to be made, with a view to stimulating the flagging action of the Local Authorities?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: If I have power to stimulate the Local Authorities I will certainly do so.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): Will the right hon. Gentleman, pending the action of the Local Authorities and the inquiry of his own medical officer, consider the advisability of issuing a Circular to all the Local Authorities, directing that all new bakehouses must be above ground and not under ground, as too many now are?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I will certainly consider that suggestion.

THRIFT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. C. ROUNDELL (York, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, with respect to public elementary schools in England and Wales, he can state the number of school savings banks and the number of schools in which scholars had accounts in Post Office or other savings banks in the year 1893, as compared with the year preceding the Assisted Education Act; and whether the totals of amounts deposited indicate a progress of habits of thrift among the children?

MR. ACLAND: The number of school savings banks, or schools in which scholars had accounts in Post Office or other savings banks, for the year ending 31st August, 1893, was 8,548. The corresponding number for 1891 was 2,629, so that in two years since the Act of 1891 came into operation the number has been more than trebled. The Returns for 1893 show that in 6,715 school savings banks £304,090 had been deposited during the year by 746,551 children, and that the total amount standing to the credit of the depositors at the end of the year was £199,489. In addition to this, sums estimated at about £86,000 were standing to the credit of scholars in accounts at Post Office or other savings banks.

BANGOR PIER AND HARBOUR WORKS.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether anything further has been done in connection with the loan already sanctioned for the pier and harbour works at Bangor, County Down ?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : The present position is, that the powers of the borrower to execute the works having expired by lapse of time, he is applying for a Provisional Order of the Board of Trade, which will require to be confirmed this Session, extending the time for carrying out the works.

KENMARE GUARDIANS ELECTION.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at the election of Guardians for the Kenmare Electoral Division, held on the 24th March, the returning officer declared one of the candidates duly elected by a majority of five votes ; notwithstanding this decision the returning officer held a re-scrutiny on the 26th ultimo, and then allowed seven votes to the defeated candidate, which he had rejected at the previous scrutiny on the ground that the voting papers were improperly filled ; whether the returning officer refused to have the voting papers in question referred to the Local Government Board for decision as to their validity ; and if he will direct the Local Government Board to hold a full inquiry into the circumstances which induced the returning officer to act in this manner, and, pending their decision, direct that the Guardian returned on the re-scrutiny will be prevented from exercising his functions as member of the Board ?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : The Local Government Board are in communication with the unsuccessful candidates as to the several decisions of the returning officer to which they object, and on receipt of full particulars will take such steps as may be necessary for ascertaining whether the decisions were correct or otherwise. The returning officer is required by law to make a Return of the election according to the best of his judgment and ability, and I am informed he is under no obliga-

tion to submit the voting papers referred to for the opinion of the Local Government Board in the first instance. Pending the decision of the Board, there is no power to prevent the persons who have been returned from acting as Guardians.

THE NOTTINGHAM EXECUTION.

MR. BALLANTINE (Coventry) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Walter Smith, who was executed at Nottingham last week, made any confession ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : I cannot help regretting that my hon. Friend should have thought it his duty to put this question. I think that any public inquiry into statements made by persons under the sentence of death is, as a rule, to be deprecated. But as there is, I know, a certain uneasiness in the minds of many persons as to this case, I think it right to say that the night but one before his execution the prisoner stated to the officers in charge that he had bought the pistol for the purpose of killing the girl whom he shot.

ARMOUR-PIERCING PROJECTILES.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what information he can give to the House as to the results of trials of armour-piercing shot manufactured by a Sheffield firm, 9·2 inches in diameter, and weighing 380 lbs. each, which are stated to have passed entirely through a 14-inch compound plate, and then through 4 feet of oak backing into a heap of sand in the rear, without any practical damage to the shot itself ; whether the French projectiles have given similarly good results ; and whether the Admiralty will in all cases give the preference to warlike stores of Home manufacture ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : This is a question which should be addressed to the War Office.

MR. HANBURY : But a portion of the projectiles I refer to, which was obtained from French sources, were required by the Admiralty ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : No part of the projectiles referred to in the question were bought by the Admiralty.

THE EVICTIONS ON THE ARRAN ISLANDS.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a steamer was used to convey the police to the scene of the evictions on the Arran Islands; and if he could state how the bailiffs were conveyed?

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): At the same time, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the evidence given by witnesses before the Cowper Commission as to the Islands of Arran, from which it appears that there is no natural soil on these Islands, but that the crops are grown on soil artificially created by the labour of the Islanders out of sand, seaweed, and decayed ferns placed in layers on the bare rock and surrounded by walls to prevent it from being blown away; also that in dry seasons, such as that of 1893, there is a complete failure of crops and imminent risk of starvation; and whether, having regard to the fact that the soil of the Island is wholly the result of the labour of the tenants themselves, and to the failure of the crops in the past year, he will either refuse the aid of the constabulary in the carrying out of the evictions now in progress, or will at any rate make representations to the owners and their agents with a view of stopping the eviction of the tenants under these circumstances?

MR. J. MORLEY: The police were conveyed on this duty to the Arran Islands in the steamer belonging to the Galway Steamboat Company, which visits the islands three times a week. The Sheriff, bailiffs, and the agent were conveyed by the same steamer. I am aware that evidence to the effect mentioned in the first part of the question of the hon. Member for Northampton was given before the Cowper Commission, which reported in February, 1887. Decrees of ejectment having been obtained by the landlord and placed in the hands of the Sheriff of the County of Galway for execution, the Government had no discretion in the matter, but were bound to afford adequate protection and the assistance of the constabulary in the execution

of the decrees. It was decided last year by the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland, from which decision it was held by the Court of Appeal that no appeal lay, that the Government were under absolute obligation to afford protection and assistance to the Sheriff, not only in the execution of decrees of ejectment by daytime but also in the case of night seizures under writs of the superior Courts, and that the executive officer refusing such assistance is liable to attachment and indictment. Informal communications did pass between the Divisional Commissioner and the agent as to these evictions, but the determination of the landlord to proceed was not shaken.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman any information as to the amount for which the processes of ejectment were issued?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not got it with me at this moment.

MR. CHANNING: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether in the informal communication addressed to the owners or agents their attention was drawn to the character of these holdings, which is quite unique; and whether they were informed of the gross hardship and the barbarity of these evictions?

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not suppose the communication was of that nature.

MR. SEXTON asked whether, as the evictions were going on from day to day, any shelter had been provided for the people, a great many families having been rendered homeless; and whether the Inspector had returned to the islands from Galway. If so, would his Report be laid on the Table?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not yet had time to receive a Report. The Inspector reached the north island last night at 9 o'clock, and he telegraphs that the relieving officer is providing temporary relief to the evicted families which are considered destitute. Instructions have been given to provide temporary shelter, and on no account to allow the people to be exposed out of doors at night. No evictions have yet taken place on the south island, and this morning the sea was too rough to permit of communication with the island.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Bearing in mind the condition of these people, will the Chief Secretary see that relief is brought to these people?

MR. J. MORLEY : I have just stated that. Three weeks ago I sent an Inspector down to see that no persons suffered hardship. The Inspector will have power to see that the relieving officer does all that is required.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL : I meant to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman intends to take any steps to improve the condition of these people, or whether this is to go on for ever ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I do not think the reception which Government proposals meet with encourages them to make fresh efforts.

MR. SEXTON : Will there be some relaxation of the ordinary outdoor relief ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I can only repeat that the Inspector has been instructed to see that no hardships take place.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) : May I ask whether Lord Carnarvon, who visited these Islands in 1885, left any record of any remonstrance addressed to these landladies ?

MR. J. MORLEY : I have not come across any such document.

INLAND BRANCH, GENERAL POST OFFICE.

MR. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, considering that one of the duties of the Inland Branch, General Post Office, was a few years ago 12 noon to 8 p.m., which duty is, on the recommendation of the medical officer, allotted to invalids and the older men in the Service, he will explain why this time has been altered to 11.45 a.m. to 8 p.m., or 8.15 p.m., per day for six days per week ; whether those men are also under an obligation to remain after 8 p.m. without pay when the exigencies of the duty require it, and by whose authority the time has been lengthened ; and whether he will order that the men be paid for all time exceeding 48 hours per week ?

MR. A. MORLEY : I find that the attendance referred to by the hon. Member was altered many years ago to 11.45 a.m. to 8 p.m., instead of 12 noon to 8 p.m., at the request and for the convenience of the staff on duty, in order that they might be allowed an extended interval for dinner after 12 noon (instead of having to take it before noon), and also a longer interval for tea. It is not

the fact that this duty is allotted to invalids and older men, though a few of these may be employed on it. It seldom occurs that the staff are kept on duty more than a few minutes after 8 p.m. The attendance is on no occasion sufficiently prolonged to entitle them to overtime payment.

RUSO-GERMAN COMMERCIAL TREATY.

MR. HOLLAND (Salford, N.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether British traders may, under the Most Favoured Nation treatment, rely on receiving whatever advantages are conferred by the new Russo-German Commercial Treaty ; and whether certificates of origin are still required in Russia for British goods ?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : British traders are entitled under the existing Treaty between Great Britain and Russia to the benefits of the Russo-German Commercial Treaty. Certificates of origin are not now required by Russia except for a very few articles. These are spirits and liqueurs, wines in bottle, preserved fish, lead and zinc. The new Regulations as to this will be published in full.

THE ARMY MEDICAL STAFF.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will be able to consider favourably the Petition of Surgeon Major Hamilton George Gardner for reinstatement in the Service, in view of the facts that that officer served for 16 years in the Army Medical Staff ; that he retired voluntarily in December, 1890, his name being still retained "in the retired list as liable to be recalled for service ;" that he receives no pay or retaining fee for such retention ; that there is nothing recorded against him as an officer ; and that there is said to be a paucity of military medical officers, especially for service in India ?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : A medical officer who has retired voluntarily from the Army is not eligible for re-instatement in the Service although he is liable to be recalled for duty in a case of emergency up to the age of 55 years. There is at

present no such emergency, and there is no paucity of medical officers for service in India or elsewhere.

THE VOLUNTEER DECORATION.

MR. WEBSTER : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the form of the decoration has been decided on to be given to non-commissioned officers of the Volunteer Service; and, if that is the case, whether any time for their distribution has been fixed?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I hope that there will not be much longer delay in this matter.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

MR. WEBSTER : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether it is proposed to take any steps to erect an architectural and suitable façade to the South Kensington Museum, in room of the present constructions?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) : Mr. Aston Webb's plans, which were approved by the late Government, will be placed in the Tea Room on Monday, and the hon. Member will then have an opportunity of forming an opinion upon them.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS (IRELAND).

MR. H. PLUNKETT (Dublin Co., S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that much dissatisfaction prevails in the Registry of Deeds (Ireland), both in the Senior Staff and in the Second Division, with regard to the scale of pay and the stagnation of promotion; and whether it would be possible to appoint some of these officials to posts in the Registry of Titles, as contemplated and specially provided for by the Local Registration of Title Act?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : I have had inquiry made into the grievances alleged in my hon. Friend's question, and I am satisfied that neither the first and second classes of the staff nor the Second Division clerks in the Registry of Deeds Office in Dublin have fair ground of complaint. The organisation of the Registry is that of a Second Division office, and a certain number of staff posts will be added as the first and second class clerks of the old establishment disappear. As there are still 20 of these surviving,

there will not for some time be any excuse for the creation of staff posts, and I am assured that no Second Division clerk is employed on work which would justify the creation of such a post. With regard to the recent increase of staff in the Registry of Titles, I find that it consists in part of posts requiring professional qualifications, and for the rest is composed of persons temporarily employed. I can see no possibility at present of transferring to it any members of the Staff of the Registry of Deeds.

CIVIL SERVICE SUPERANNUATION.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) : I beg to ask the Attorney General whether "the rights existing at the passing of this Act," referred to in Section 10 of the Superannuation Act of 1887, include the customary prospects of promotion of Civil Servants?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.) : "Customary prospects of promotion" cannot, I think, properly be called rights; but, whatever they are, the Act of 1887 does not in any way affect them. It is conversant with an entirely different subject.

UGANDA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have now come to a decision in regard to the affairs of Uganda; whether he can state what that decision is; whether further Papers can be presented on the subject; and whether he can intimate any likely date when time can be allotted for the consideration of the question in this House?

SIR J. KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton) : At the same time, I will ask the hon. Gentleman if the Papers relating to Uganda are ready for distribution; and if he will endeavour to procure their issue without further delay?

SIR E. GREY : The announcement of the decision of the Government with reference to Uganda will be made on Monday, and the late Sir G. Portal's Report will be distributed on Tuesday morning.

SUNDAY PREACHING IN CORK.

MR. BARTON (Armagh, Mid.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland

whether he proposes to take any steps to put an end to the scenes of violence and bloodshed caused by attacks of organised mobs in Cork streets on Sundays?

MR. J. MORLEY: During these painful and deplorable scenes the police have acted on careful instructions given to them, and I believe they have so acted as to win the approval of both Protestants and Catholics in the City of Cork. No doubt there have been complaints, and I have carefully inquired into the circumstances and read the Reports from the Constabulary, as well as the communications which have reached me from other parties concerned; but I confess I cannot see how I could give more careful instructions, or how those instructions could be more efficiently carried out than they have been. Everybody regrets that these scenes should have taken place, but there has been enormous exaggeration. The hon. Member may rest assured that everything that can be done shall be done to bring the state of affairs to an end.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the great majority of the Protestants of Cork have expressed their disgust at these preaching performances at least as strongly as the Catholics?

MR. D. BARTON: I am suggesting nothing against the conduct of the police. I am merely asking what steps have been taken with reference to next Sunday?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Is it true that, notwithstanding the instructions given to the police, several of the citizens of Cork have been brutally assaulted with the police present, and no arrests made?

MR. J. MORLEY: There have, no doubt, been assaults committed in the course of these transactions. The police had the duty to perform of preventing that which was illegal. What was illegal was obstruction, and they have done all they can to put that down. It is not a mere matter of making arrests, which under the circumstances is not an easy task. They might not always arrest the right persons. I believe the police acted with absolute impartiality and great judgment.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: In the case of the obstruction of a thoroughfare, is it not the duty of the police to summon for obstruction?

MR. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the disturbances were got up for electioneering purposes?

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Cork) asked whether under the late Government similar difficulty arose at Arklow, and whether a clergyman who caused the obstruction was summoned and punished?

MR. J. MORLEY: I believe that persons were sent to prison in Arklow, but the effect was not to stop the street preaching, so I am not encouraged to take a similar course.

MR. CREAM (Queen's Co., Ossory): Have not the Catholic and Protestant Magistrates of Cork issued a proclamation calling on the preachers to cease?

MR. J. MORLEY: That is so. It is perfectly true that the great majority of both the Protestants and Catholics of Cork desire an end put to these proceedings.

THE SYSTEM OF "PAIRING."

MR. SEXTON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to submit a question to you with reference to the records of the House as to the Division on the Second Reading of the East London Water Bill yesterday, the Second Reading being carried by a majority of one. I find that the name of the hon. Member for the Nuneaton Division of Warwickshire (Mr. Newdigate) is given as voting in the Division; and, with reference to the vote of that hon. Member, I have to call attention to the following statement which has been handed to me by one of the Whips of the Irish Party:—

"Mr. Blake (South Longford) and Mr. Newdigate (Nuneaton Division, Warwickshire), although paired with absent Members, were both in the House yesterday, and as Mr. Blake desired to take part in the Divisions I asked Lord Walter Lennox (Chichester Division, Sussex) early in the afternoon if he would agree that each of the hon. Gentlemen should be free to vote. He did not accept the proposal at the time; but after the bell had rung for the Division on the East London Water Bill, I met him at the door of the House and renewed the offer, to which he then consented. I asked him if the arrangement would apply to the Division about to take place, and he replied that there was not then time to inform Mr. Newdigate. I therefore sent word to that effect to Mr. Blake, who was in the Lobby prepared to vote, and he abstained from taking part in the Division. Mr. Newdigate's name appears in the List this morning as having voted on the opposite side."

It would therefore appear that Mr. Newdigate must have been released from his obligation by his Party, otherwise he could not have voted, whilst the Whip maintained the obligation in the case of Mr. Blake. I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether the vote must be regarded as valid, and, if so, whether some explanation is not due to the House of the circumstances under which Mr. Newdigate recorded his vote?

*MR. SPEAKER: There is no official or Parliamentary recognition of the system of pairing. If the name of the hon. Member who voted wrongly had been struck off the List, it would in that event have been left to me, in my capacity as Speaker of the House, to give the casting vote in the Division. I do not wish to say what I should have done under the circumstances. The system of pairing is not recognised officially, and I can take no notice of the incident. It is a custom that has grown up owing to the convenience it affords to Members, and, of course, it is fully recognised by all that it must be conducted upon the most strictly honourable principles, which fact I am convinced has hitherto never been lost sight of by hon. Members. I have no doubt at all that the hon. Member for Warwickshire will be able to give a completely satisfactory explanation of the reason which induced him to vote, when, as a matter of fact, he was paired at the time of the Division, and was thereby precluded from recording his vote.

LORD W. LENNOX (Sussex, Chichester): By the indulgence of the House I should like to say one word in explanation of the question which has been raised by the hon. Gentleman. I think I shall be able to explain it at once, and it will be the shortest way if I say that both the hon. Member for Longford and also the hon. Member for North-East Warwickshire were paired for yesterday. They were paired with different people, and not with each other. An arrangement was arrived at between the Whips on both sides that when both those hon. Members arrived in the House they might take part in any Division that took place, and so counteract each other's votes. When the first Division took place I was not aware that the Member for North-East Warwickshire had arrived in the House, and I therefore asked that the

hon. Member for Longford should not take part in that Division. It seems, however, that I was wrong in thinking that my hon. Friend had not arrived here. He had arrived at the House; he thought he was able to vote, and he accordingly took part in the Division. I can only say, Sir, that this was entirely due to a misapprehension, partly on the part of myself and partly on the part of my hon. Friend, and I am sure the House will be quite satisfied that it was through no want of courtesy to the House or courtesy to other hon. Members which made my hon. Friend take part in that Division. I may, perhaps, be allowed to say, Sir, that it is not altogether unprecedented for mistakes of that kind to occur; and I may, perhaps, be allowed to remind the House that on Tuesday last the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Birrell) took part in a Division as a Teller, although he, on that occasion, was paired with another hon. Member.

MR. NEWDIGATE (Warwickshire, Nuneaton): I hope, with the indulgence of the House, I may be allowed to say one word on this question. On Wednesday I was assured that my "pair" for Thursday was off. Needless to say, had it not been for this intimation I should not have thought of voting; and I can only assure the House that I am most sorry I inadvertently voted in the Division.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Would the Chief Secretary, for the convenience of the House, say when the Government propose that the Debate on the proposal for a Scotch Grand Committee should be resumed?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Perhaps, at the same time, the right hon. Gentleman will make any general statement it may be in his power to make as to the future course of Public Business.

MR. J. MORLEY: In the absence of the Leader of the House, I think I may announce that he proposes to move on Monday that Government Business shall have priority on Tuesdays, and that we shall propose to take Morning Sitings on Fridays. Of course, the Navy Estimates will be taken on Monday as promised, and the future course of the Scotch Debate will be settled in con-

nection with the duration of the Debate on the Navy.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: How long do the Government intend to take the time of private Members?

MR. J. MORLEY: For the present, at all events, up to Whitsuntide.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, that he had not had time to see the general bearings of the Motion of which the Government gave such short notice, but if it should turn out, after an examination of the precedents, that he and his friends thought the Government were very early interfering with the time of private Members there must be a long Debate. Would that interfere with the Debate on the Navy Estimates, on which they had been promised a full discussion? And if the time on Monday became limited through the cause he had mentioned, would further time be given?

MR. J. MORLEY hoped that no prolonged discussion would be necessary on the Motion he had announced under the very peculiar circumstances in which the House found itself. There was no disposition to grudge the proper time for the naval discussion.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) inquired whether the Government would take all Tuesdays irrespective of the position which some Members had gained through the ballot? In some of the Motions which had obtained the first position many Members took a deep interest.

MR. J. MORLEY replied that it would be more convenient to deal with that question when the Motion was discussed. He would, however, point out that the only form in which the Government could take the time of the House was that which he mentioned.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) understood that if there were any particular topics standing first for Tuesdays in which general interest was taken, the Government would state their course in connection with them on Monday.

MR. J. MORLEY said, those were questions for Monday.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Are the Government going to give up certain Tuesdays to their own friends and exclude other Members?

MR. J. MORLEY: I may assure the hon. Gentleman there is no intention of the kind.

NOTICE OF MOTION.

MR. CHANNING: I beg to give notice that in consequence of the reply I have received to Question No. 18, I shall draw further attention to the matter by moving a reduction on the Irish Estimates.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 2.)

Read the third time, and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) BILL.—(No. 3.)

As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.—(No. 1.)

As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.—(No. 122.)

Read a second time, and committed.

COCKENZIE FISHERY PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of Sir G. Trevelyan, Bill to confirm an Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, under "The Sea Fisheries Act, 1868," relating to a several mussel fishery at Cockenzie, county of Haddington, ordered to be brought in by Sir G. Trevelyan and the Lord Advocate.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 146.]

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 89.)

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES) (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had selected the following Six Members to be the Chairmen's Panel and to serve as Chairmen of the two Standing Committees to be appointed under Standing Order 49:—Sir Henry James, Mr. Henry Matthews, Sir G. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir Matthew White Ridley, and Mr. Stansfeld.

Report to lie upon the Table.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed,
“That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair.”

ROYALTY RENTS AND WAYLEAVES.

RESOLUTION.

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince) rose to move—

“That this House is of opinion that the present system of Royalty Rents and Wayleaves is injurious to the great industries; that the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Mining Royalties goes to show the injurious nature of the present system; and this House is of opinion that the time has arrived when such Rents and Wayleaves should be acquired by the State.”

He said, this was one of the most important questions that could be discussed in the House of Commons, because to a considerable extent the question of mineral royalties and wayleaves depended upon the prosperity of our commerce and industries. They often had discussed in that House economic questions which raised the subject of foreign competition, but he asserted that there was no question which more concerned and affected the question of foreign competition than the question of mineral royalties. Practically speaking, so far as the working classes of this country were concerned, there were no two opinions on this question. There might be exceptions, but they were so small that the number was not worth noticing. This question was discussed at a recent Conference of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain at Leicester, where the subject was discussed not only as to the nationalisation of minerals, but also as to nationalisation of mines, and a resolution was carried almost unanimously in favour of the nationalisation of mines as well as minerals and wayleaves. For years past this question had been fully discussed by different sections of the working classes of the country. So far back as 1886, when the Trade Unions Congress met at Hull, his hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Durham moved an important resolution dealing with this question. The resolution was in the following terms :—

“That, in the opinion of this Congress, the royalty rents and other charges demanded by the landlords of this country are iniquitous and injurious. Iniquitous, because they form a monopoly of our mineral resources, where they should be used for the good of all. Injurious, because they place a tax upon our staple industries, interfering with, and hindering our commercial prosperity, restricting the profits of the capitalists, and limiting the already too small wages of the workman; and this Congress instructs the Parliamentary Committee to take immediate steps for instituting an inquiry into the character and amount of these royalties and charges with the object of making them national and not individual property.”

That resolution was carried unanimously by the Trade Unions Congress, representing directly 1,500,000 workers, and indirectly a much larger number. In 1888 a similar resolution was passed unanimously at Bradford. No doubt the recommendation of the Royal Commission would be quoted against his Resolution. With the view of anticipating that argument, he would quote the words of an hon. Member of that House whose opinion would carry great weight. He referred to the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), a gentleman whose experience on questions of this kind no one would be inclined to dispute for a single moment. Speaking at the National Miners' Conference in Manchester, on the 22nd of November, 1886, the hon. Member for Morpeth said—

“Why did the difference between Great Britain and other countries as to royalty rents exist? There were many reasons, but he believed the chief one was because in other countries on the Continent whatever other errors they might have committed they had taken care to retain their minerals as the property of the State. They had not allowed them to become the property of private individuals. That gave these countries a double benefit. They paid less; and what they did pay, instead of going into the pocket of private individuals, it went to the benefit of the State, and was used for the advantage of the community as a whole. That was the just and true principle to lay down in regard to minerals.”

He observed that the hon. Member formed a very important and conspicuous Member of the Commission that inquired into this subject, and he anticipated that the hon. Gentleman, who was going to move an Amendment to the Resolution, would quote the recommendation of the Commission as against the Resolution. But whatever might be the opinion of that Commission, in 1888 it was clear the hon. Member for Morpeth held the opinion

that the royalties should be the property of the State. In the Miners' Conference held in Birmingham, in March 1889, (the very year that the Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into this subject), and at which there were present representing the County of Northumberland the hon. Member for Morpeth and his hon. Friend who represented the Wansbeck Division of Northumberland, Mr. Cowey, Yorkshire, moved, and Mr. Weir seconded, the following resolution :—

“In the name of the miners of the United Kingdom this Conference tenders its best thanks to Mr. T. Burt, M.P., for having succeeded in inducing the Government to grant a Royal Commission to inquire into the mineral royalty question, and expresses a hope that the Commission will be sufficiently wide in its scope to thoroughly deal with the questions, and will be composed of men in whom the miners and their leaders have confidence, and that the outcome of its labours may be the full and complete restoration of the minerals to the State.”

He had quoted these statements and resolutions to show that, whatever might have been the opinion of the labour section of the Commission in the year 1894, at least some of the most prominent members held different opinions in 1889. His Resolution might be easily divided into three points : first, that the present system of paying royalty rents, &c., was injurious to the nation ; second, that the evidence given before the Royal Commission went to prove this proposition ; and third, as a consequence of this, he asked the House to affirm the opinion that the time had arrived when the State should acquire the minerals of the nation. Dealing with the first of these points, he contended that the present system, under private ownership, gave an unfair advantage to foreign competitors both in coal and iron in the markets of the world. According to the most reliable statements from the most experienced individuals, the average mineral royalties paid on coal in this country was 8d. per ton, while the royalty paid in France, Belgium, and Germany averaged 1½d. per ton, which went to the State in lieu of taxation. The average royalty paid on iron ore in this country was 3s. a ton, while on the Continent it was very little more than that now paid on coal. Last year 170,000,000 tons of coal were produced in this country, and an average royalty of 8d. per ton amounted to £5,500,000 sterling. On the Continent, a trifle over

£1,000,000 sterling was paid on the same production. It was evident, therefore, that the foreign employer occupied a position of unfair advantage as compared with the English capitalist. He wanted to point out to the House that these royalties were not always paid directly. They were paid very often indirectly in the shape of dead rents and other forms, and when these taxes of various kinds were levied upon employers they became a most serious impost upon industries, and tended very much to retard and cause depression of trade. He would give one illustration to show the nature of mineral royalties, and how oppressive they were upon the various industries. He would quote from the evidence given by Mr. Hewlett, the agent and principal Director of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company, and one of the most prominent colliery owners in Great Britain. Mr. Hewlett was examined before the Royal Commission on the 17th of June, 1890, and he then stated that the Wigan Coal and Iron Company had overpaid in minimum rents up to December 30th, 1890, £313,642. That was a payment for dead rents, and to a very great extent for coal that had not been obtained, and probably would not be obtained, during the continuance of the Company. He (Mr. Woods) contended that it was a complete fraud upon the Company to ask for a tax upon a commodity that had not been got and could not possibly be got during the working of the colliery by the Company. Mr. Hewlett further stated that the amount paid for coal under the minimum rent clauses of the leases and for coal which they had not been able to work was over £60,454. In some leases the lessor had the power to terminate the leases, and Mr. Hewlett stated that in one case a lease of 70 years was terminated at the end of the first half. On that lease they had overpaid for coal which they had not obtained £9,849. They had also built cottages and workshops on the tenure of the whole lease at a cost of £5,800, all of which was forfeited. Mr. Hewlett concluded his statement by saying that the modern leases in Lancashire were, in his opinion, more onerous than the older leases. He submitted that Mr. Hewlett's statements were in themselves sufficient to lead the House to take definite action with a view to reforming these tremendous

abuses which pressed so heavily upon many industries. But, in order to make himself sure, he had written to another employer in Lancashire only last week and asked his private opinion as to the influence of mineral royalties and wayleaves upon his colliery, and he would quote from the reply he had received from this gentleman. ["Name!"] He did not know that he was at liberty to divulge the name, but he would show it to any hon. Member privately. This gentleman, who was an employer of 2,000 miners, wrote saying that he did not object to the principle of royalties provided they were reasonable, but in his experience for the last 20 years they had been considerably increased. During the years 1873-4, when there was a period of prosperity in the coal trade of this country, he had no hesitation in saying that many leases in Lancashire were granted on an increase of 50 per cent., and since then the lessors had endeavoured to maintain those abnormal prices. There were leases in his district (said the writer) where as much as 9½d. per ton was paid for common coal, which he considered very high. As for the wayleaves, he thought they ought to be abolished. The lessors were well paid for the surface land occupied by the colliery without seeking wayleaves. In South Lancashire up to 1873 the surface rent was 1d. per ton, and now it was 1½d., whilst in one case he knew of it was 2d. He (Mr. Woods) had quoted the statements of two of the largest colliery owners in Lancashire, and he verily believed that if he obtained the evidence of the whole of the owners in the country they would express a similar opinion. He would like now to point out the baneful effects of mineral royalties. He maintained that the present system of paying royalties and wayleaves often led to terrible strikes and lockouts. He knew one colliery where there was a prolonged strike, which lasted from October, 1889, to March, 1890, the point of dispute being that the collier wanted 5d. per ton more than the employer was able to give. One of the reasons given by the employer why he could not pay the price demanded by the workman was because of the high rent of the minerals. He knew that had been disputed, but it could be supported by a large deputation who had an inter-

view with the employer to whom he referred. As to the baneful influence of wayleaves, he knew one colliery near Bolton where the colliery-owner offered to give £10 per acre for a right of way through certain land, but this was refused by the intermediate landlord, and the result was that an outlying field of coal could not be worked at all unless at the cost of sinking a new shaft. He knew another case in which the owner of a colliery wanted the use of a short road through an intervening property. The owner offered to pay 1s. per ton. for the right of a single box to go over the land, the road being only 60 yards long, and the offer was absolutely refused; so that in that case also the owner if he wanted to work the outlying coal seam must sink a shaft, which would put the Company to a very extensive loss indeed. He knew another colliery in the neighbourhood of Rochdale where the owner had to deal with no less than 20 landowners, and this meant very serious cost indeed, for the owner had to treat with every one of the landowners and get leases from them in order to get a right of way. His next point was that the evidence given before the Royalty Rents Commission proved the injurious nature of royalty rents, wayleaves, and the manner of taking and giving leases. After having critically examined the Report of the Royal Commission, he should say that at least 80 per cent. of the witnesses had distinctly stated that colliery rents and wayleaves were injurious to the coal and iron industries of this country. In the face of this strong testimony, he could not understand the tame recommendation which the Commission had made. He did not ask the House to find fault with the Commission which had been appointed to inquire into a difficult and extensive subject, but it struck him as singular that after the strong evidence which had been given the Commissioners did not, even in a Minority Report, give a proper judgment on the situation. In his opinion, the recommendations of the Commission were not only tame but harmless, and would not be productive of good to any class of the community. They said, first of all, that the present system of paying royalty rents had not interfered with the development of our mineral resources and had not interfered with the export trade. There would be

difference of opinion on those points ; but, however that might be, he submitted that the Commission was not appointed to inquire into the question of the development of our mineral resources or the extent of the export trade. It was appointed to inquire as to the effect of those mineral royalties and wayleaves and leases on the profits of employers and the wages of workmen, but they had not expressed an opinion on those two points. He came now to a more difficult matter—the question of a remedy—which had never been discussed in the House before. He had not the slightest doubt that there would be a great difficulty in arriving at a decision as to the remedy that should be applied. For the evils he had described he proposed a remedy which he believed was desired by 99 per cent. of the workmen. The proposal he made was that, seeing the injurious nature of these imposts upon our staple industries, the time had arrived for the State to procure the minerals of the nation. Nothing short of that would solve the question. He held it was a blot upon the civilisation of England, with all its power, wealth, and influence, that she should be at least a century behind France, Belgium, and Germany on the question of owning the minerals of the country. In those countries all the minerals belonged to the State, the proceeds went to the reduction of taxation, while in this country the large revenues derived from the same source went into the private pockets of individuals. He would not trouble the House with an historical disquisition on the manner in which the minerals of the country had got into the possession of private individuals. All he would say was, that the way in which this had come about formed a page of corruption and jobbery unparalleled in our history, except, perhaps, that of the Union between England and Ireland. But the question was, how could the latter part of his Resolution be carried out?—what was the remedy to apply? This was, no doubt, a difficult problem, but all our great economic questions were surrounded by difficulties, especially in the presence of so much poverty and destitution and competition in the country. The late Sir G. Elliot, while the recent unfortunate coal strike was in progress, propounded a scheme for buying up the mines and minerals of the country for £20,000,000 by a large syndicate of mine-owners,

land-owners, colliery-owners, and miners. Under this scheme a price would be put on coal which would pay the landowner, give a collier a fair wage, and pay the mine-owner at least 15 per cent. on his capital. He could agree to that scheme provided they put the nation in the place of the syndicate. The late Mr. John Bright suggested that money should be borrowed at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in order to relieve the Irish peasantry, and the same process might be adopted for raising the money for buying up the minerals of the country and thereby deriving benefit for the good of the State. He by no means was so extreme as to suggest that minerals should be confiscated. He would be the last man in the world to approve of the confiscation of anything that belonged to other individuals, but he maintained that unless the present owner of minerals could prove his right to them by purchase there could be no harm in the State taking back that which had been stolen from the nation in days gone by. His Resolution involved a great question, and the House of Commons ought to thresh the subject out thoroughly. He had several reasons for suggesting that the State should become the owner of the minerals of the country. In the first place, the State would be more sympathetic and show more humanity than many of the lessors had done in dealing with the difficulties of the colliery owners in working the minerals of the country. That opinion was very strongly expressed by most owners of mines, who declared they could get no redress from any of the lessors. His next reason for suggesting that the State should become the owner of the minerals was because he believed the present system was a serious loss and inconvenience both to employing and working-class communities, and consequently to the nation at large. He thought it would be admitted by any Member of the House, if it was proved—as he thought he had proved—that those mineral rights were injurious to the best interests of the nation, and brought about a serious loss and inconvenience to our great commercial undertakings, that it was the duty of the House to put those things right. In the third place, he believed that his Resolution, if carried, would give almost universal satisfaction to the community outside. He hoped that hon.

Members would not look at the Resolution from any narrow point of view ; but that they would take a broad view of it, remembering that those mineral royalties were at the bottom of every great evil in connection with all our commercial undertakings. He believed the royalties seriously hampered industry, caused strikes, lock-outs, low wages, and no profit ; and, as all hon. Members did their best to bring about changes for the good of the country, he ventured to think the House would carry the Resolution which he had the honour to move.

*Mr. BURNIE (Swansea Town) said, he rose to second the Resolution, but would do so with some difficulty after the very able, lucid, and instructive speech to which the House had just listened. He somewhat unexpectedly had to take the place of the hon. Member for the North Lonsdale Division of Lancashire, who would have seconded the Motion if he had not been called away by a domestic bereavement, and who would have dealt more especially with the injurious effects of the present system on the iron and steel industries of the North of England. He, for his part, would to a great extent have to confine himself to the effect which the mining royalties had on the coal trade of South Wales ; but before doing so he would quote one sentence from Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell's book on iron and steel manufacture, which dealt with the iron trade of the North of England, though he admitted that since that book was published there had been some reduction of royalties and consequent improvement in the position of the trader. Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell estimated the royalties on a ton of pig iron, including, of course, those on the ore, the limestone, and the coal for smelting at about 3s. 6d. per ton in the Cleveland District, 6s. in Scotland, and 6s. 3d. in Cumberland ; while in Germany the rate was only 6d. per ton ; in France, 8d. per ton ; and in Belgium 1s. 3d. per ton. When they remembered the enormous transactions in pig iron, the thousands of tons that changed hands at a fraction profit—in fact, a halfpenny per ton would make or mar the chance of the bargain—and when they compared the position of other countries with the position of Great Britain, the difficulties which the manufacturers of this country had to contend against would be realised. In addition to the royalties, we had to

pay higher railway rates than on the Continent, and unless some alteration was made in the present system in the direction indicated in the Motion, not only should we have a difficulty in maintaining our commercial supremacy, but it would give us enough to do to hold an important position in the commercial world. The cost of labour of every kind—management, superintendence, and manual work—on blast furnacing 600 tons of iron was, according to a competent authority, about £95 a week ; while the royalties on the same amount of iron was £202. Therefore, the men who worked got less than half of what was paid in royalties. The mining royalties were, unfortunately, from a national point of view, mainly owned by private individuals. According to the law as it stood, the owner of the surface of the land claimed from the centre of the earth to the sky, or, in less legal but more emphatic language, from heaven to “another place.” In England 66 out of 38,000,000 persons held nearly 2,000,000 acres of land, and 710 persons held a quarter of England and Wales. In Scotland a quarter of the land was held by 24 persons. It must be borne in mind that it was not only the millions of money derived yearly from royalties on coal and other minerals worked that we had to consider, but also the enormous values of the lands and the minerals underneath that had been taken from the nation, and were now claimed by a comparatively few private individuals. What was the present system ? The minerals were claimed by those who, as a rule, neither discovered their existence nor utility, nor invented the means of winning them, nor extracted them from the land directly by their labour, nor indirectly by their capital. On the contrary, whoever lost the mineral owner won. The collier risked his happiness, health, and life, and ended his days, if not in the workhouse, very close to it. The colliery owner risked his money, and frequently, by anxiety as to the result of his undertaking, his physical strength and life. Sometimes, of course, the colliery owner accumulated a fortune ; but the average return on the enterprise in Wales was said to be not more than 5 per cent. The royalty owner, on the other hand, stood to win under any circumstances. If the mine was successful he got large sums in

royalties; if bad times came he had his dead rent charges, and if the colliery owner went into bankruptcy the mineral owner put in a preferential claim, seized all the property, waited for better times, and sold again. He would give one example. There was a colliery in Wales and Monmouthshire which for the workers meant the grave of 268 men, and for the colliery proprietors a loss, it was said, of £500,000. But how did the royalty owner fare? For years he drew large sums yearly in royalties and rents, and the mine having been subsequently to the explosion re-opened thousands a year were again being received for royalties, &c. Then they came to the amount of the royalties. One hon. Gentleman had said that they amounted to 8d. per ton on the coal. According to the Royal Commission, however, it was 5½d. The figures were challenged at the time, and he thought that the Commission were far under the mark. Still, 5½d. per ton would serve his purpose. In 1892 the total amount of coal worked was 181,000,000 tons. The royalties on that amount, at 5½d. a ton, came to over £4,000,000. Surely that was a pretty good draft on the commercial enterprise of the country for coal alone. The question of wayleaves was of equal importance as hampering the working of the minerals. Wayleaves had been described as "the key of the coal cellar," and the landholder had the power, and often did enforce, more money for the key of the cellar than the coal in it was worth. Of course, so long as royalties were in the hands of an individual, it was only human nature that he should demand his royalty, and as things stood at present his royalty must come first. In his opinion, however, that was a wrong position. A living wage for the collier should come first—a generous and liberal living wage—because if there was one man more than another who ought to be paid well for his work it was the miner who spent his days delving in the bowels of the earth for a necessity of human existence. Next, he would put the interest on the capital invested, and the royalty third. He invariably sympathised with colliers in their struggles against a reduction of wages, and if he were a collier he would strenuously resist a reduction in his wages if the royalties were not reduced first. Then came the still more important point, and that was the terms on

which the minerals were to be acquired. He would like to be fair to the mine-owners, but there must be fair play for the nation as well. They must not lose sight of the fact that there was wrong perpetrated in bringing about the present position of land-holding in all its phases. Landowners' Parliaments had legislated in the interest of land-holders, and he now wished to see a people's Parliament legislate in the interest of the nation as a whole. He did not say that the land and minerals should be wrested from the landowners, but he maintained that a fair balance-sheet should be struck between them and the nation. If this country was to retain her commercial supremacy, or perhaps even her commercial existence, it was absolutely impossible that the present system should go on. When they looked at the vast amount of money in this country in the shape of unearned increment in land values and minerals and the royalties almost entirely going into the pockets of private individuals they could understand, from an economic point of view, why there was bound to be on the other side vast poverty and misery. At the present day, whilst fabulous fortunes were being made by some, the struggle for existence not only amongst labourers, but amongst shopkeepers, tradesmen, commercial men, merchants and even professional men, was a continuous and desperate one. It was absurd that in a great and wealthy country like England there should be those extremes of enormous fortunes and absolute poverty. Could it be said that such a system was right, and for the national advantage? And if the existing land laws were not right, and were not to the national advantage, what was to be done? He would refer the House on this subject not to a Trafalgar Square speaker, not to a platform orator unrestrained by responsibility and addressing a meeting of his friends and admirers, but to an address by the highest legal dignitary in the land—the Lord Chief Justice—who, in addressing a meeting of the Juridical Society in Scotland, used the following language with reference to the land laws:—

"These Land Laws," he said, "might be for the general advantage, and if they could be shown to be by all means they should be maintained; but if not, does any man, with anything he is pleased to call his mind, deny that a state of law under which such mischief could exist, under which the country itself would exist not

for its people, but for a mere handful of them, ought to be instantly and absolutely set aside?"

The Radicals of the country wanted to get at the root of this question. They held that the present system was not right, and was not to the national advantage, and, that being so, it ought to be dealt with in the way suggested by the Lord Chief Justice—that was, "instantly and absolutely set aside." It was only by a greater and wider distribution of wealth that the happiness of the country would be brought about; and Parliament would do well not to shirk dealing with these important questions whilst they had an opportunity of doing so on reasonable conditions. No well-meaning workman, tradesman, professional man, landowner, or wealthy squire need have any fear of a programme that would do something towards removing the misery and destitution that was in our midst, and to uplift that wretched stratum of society, the existence of which was a disgrace to the country, to civilisation, and to humanity. A celebrated writer a fervent speaker, and a generous-hearted democrat, whose name and teachings, however, were not appreciated by the propertied classes in this country, in one of his speeches before the Financial Reform Association made use of this excellent sentiment—

"I would rather be a citizen of the smallest Republic; I would rather be a citizen of the most insignificant city where all have an opportunity of leading a healthy and decent life, rather than I would be a citizen of the most magnificent Empire where the luxury of the few is in close proximity to the destitution of the many."

We want this noble sentiment impressed upon the hearts and minds of our statesmen and public men, and if to-day he had only said one word that would lead the House to take a greater and a generous interest in this question he would consider that a by no means unimportant triumph had been achieved.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"This House is of opinion that the present system of Royalty Rents and Wayleaves is injurious to the great industries, that the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Mining Royalties goes to show the injurious nature of the present system; and this House is of opinion that the time has arrived when such Rents and Wayleaves should be acquired by the State,"—(*Mr. Woods*),

—instead thereof.

Mr. Burnie

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

**MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN* (Kent, Tunbridge), who had the following Amendment on the Paper, but which he was precluded from moving:—

"To leave out all the words after the second word 'that,' and insert the words 'it is expedient that any legislation which may be proposed to this House on the subject of Royalty Rents and Wayleaves should be based upon and in accordance with the recommendations of the Commissioners appointed in 1889 to inquire into the subject of Mining Royalties, who, after a searching investigation, extending over nearly four years, arrived at unanimous conclusions on all points, and have recently reported their conclusions and recommendations to this House,'"

said, he had listened with the greatest interest and attention to the two speeches which had been made. So far as the object of the Mover and Seconder of the Motion was to improve the condition of the miners—so far as it was a humanitarian object—he thoroughly sympathised with it, but he utterly failed to understand how hon. Members hoped to accomplish that object. He failed to understand what they really meant. The hon. Member for Ince laid down two propositions—first, that the present system of royalties and wayleaves was injurious; and secondly, that the evidence, not the Report, of the Royal Commission supported that view; and then, in the third place, he advocated a remedy of his own which was not supported either by the Evidence or Report of the Commission. The Commission asked no fewer than 20,360 Questions, they sat four years, and they produced five enormous Blue Books, so large that to get at the evidence was really a matter of mining, and a very serious matter of mining. No one could say that the Commission was an unfair one. He had analysed it, and found that it was fairly constituted. There were six members on it who were not at all interested in mines; eight who were mineral lessees (not proprietors); four who were partly interested as or on behalf of proprietors, and partly as or on behalf of lessees; and three Representatives of the working miners—namely, the hon. Member for Morpeth, the hon. Member for the Rhondda Valley, and Mr. Chisholm Robertson. The Commission took evidence at great length, and now the hon.

Member for Ince came forward and said that these people were quite incompetent to draw up a Report, that their Report was wrong and contrary to the evidence. He said, in effect, "We ask the House of Commons to reverse that Report and say it was not in accordance with the evidence, and we propose certain things against which the Commissioners unanimously reported." What was the state of affairs? The hon. Member in support of his Motion had brought forward certain cases—some of them, no doubt, very strong—but they were anonymous. He did not say where they were, and he did not say whether the people interested had given evidence before the Royal Commission or not. If they had not given evidence, why was it? Why did they make Members in this House their mouthpiece rather than make their statements before the proper tribunal? If they did give evidence, then clearly it was not believed, but that advanced on the other side was preferred to it. The hon. Member said that one of the strongest reasons why they should go in for the nationalisation of the mines was that the hon. Member for Morpeth in the year 1886 said he was in favour of that policy. But the Commission commenced its labours in 1889 and sat for four years, reporting last year; and after hearing the evidence the hon. Member for Morpeth changed his mind, and signed the Report, which said that nationalisation was impracticable, and not to be recommended. Did the hon. Member for Ince, as a candid man, prefer the opinion of the hon. Member for Morpeth before he had informed his mind to the opinion he entertained after he had heard the evidence given to the Commission? But he (Mr. Griffith-Boscawen) did not wish merely to take advantage of the peculiar position the hon. Member for Ince occupied in this matter. He would like to deal with the hon. Member's main contention. It was said that the system of royalties hampered Englishmen as compared with foreigners. To that he would apply the practical test of figures. He did not suppose that the hon. Member who put forward that view meant that it gave the foreigner an unfair advantage in our own markets, for very little foreign coal came into this country—though there were imports during the late deplorable general strike. The hon. Member must have referred to

our export trade. But the figures adduced before the Royal Commission proved that between 1865 and 1884 our exports of coal to Germany increased from 1,456,000 tons per annum to 2,485,000, or 74 per cent.; to France, from 1,589,000 to 4,367,000, or 175 per cent.; and to Belgium, from 21,310 to 295,549, or 1,280 per cent. The hon. Member had said that figures might be given showing that an increase had taken place, but it had only been *pari passu* with the increase in population. Well, he (Mr. Griffith-Boscawen) would be sorry to hear that the population had increased by 1,280 per cent. But to prove that royalties hampered our foreign trade the hon. Member must show two things: (1) that royalties entered largely into the price of coal; that royalties were higher in England than abroad. How far did royalties enter into the price of coal? In good times, when prices were very high, the price was absolutely independent of the cost of production. Perhaps it would be urged that in bad times the average royalty did enter into the price of coal; but that argument was most fallacious. Royalties were not a fixed rent on all coal alike. They marked the difference between mine and mine. If the mine were very favourably situated and produced excellent coal, then the royalty would be high; but if the mine were badly situated and produced poor coal, the royalty would be very low; so that, as a matter of fact, only the minimum royalty could enter into the cost of production. This was shown by Mr. McCreath, in Question 13,181—

"In bad times, when the collieries could just get on, how far would the royalties enter into the selling price?"

He replied—

"Not much, to the extent of the smallest royalty I should say.—Q. You would say up to the lowest royalty in the district? A. Yes."

And Mr. Daglish, President of the North of England Institute of Civil Engineers, was asked—

Q. 9665. "Supposing all the royalties were to be by a stroke of the pen abolished to-morrow, what would be your idea of the result? A. That the lessees of the better collieries would put the difference between their royalty and the lowest into their pockets.—Q. To what extent would the public be benefited? A. It would have no effect in the present prosperous times.—Q. We will take a time in which there might be some public benefit, to what extent would you put it? A. In very depressed times the public would get the whole of the advantage the limit

of which would be 1½d.—Q. That being the lowest price at which a colliery is now worked at a profit? A. Yes."

Next, to maintain that royalties hindered our coal trade abroad, it must be proved that the royalties abroad were lower than they were here. The hon. Member who introduced the subject put foreign royalties at 1½d. a ton. Abroad the mines were owned by the State, and concessions were granted at a charge to the concessionaires which came to about 1½d. per ton. But then the concessionaire sub-let his concession to men who worked the mine, and who stood to him just as the colliery owner in this country stood to the owner of royalties. If the hon. Member for Ince disputed that he (Mr. Griffith-Boscawen) had ample evidence with him to prove it. Mr. W. Gill, General Manager of the Oronera Mining Company at Bilbao in Spain, said—

"A concessionaire does not usually himself work the minerals. About one-third do and two-thirds do not. Sometimes he sells out and out; sometimes leases."

Later on he said—

"The leases are purely of an English form. The conditions are payment of an annual royalty of so much per ton, an annual minimum dead rent usually with power to surrender the mine before the term of the lease expires, provided it becomes exhausted."

Q. "What do these payments amount to?—A. You could not get a mine for 10d., nor a good mine for 1s. 3d."

Mr. Broomhead, of Sheffield, who was also connected with a Spanish Company, gave similar evidence, and stated that the royalties in Spain were actually higher than the royalties in this country. The second position of the hon. Member, which was that our system hampered us in regard to foreign trade, had therefore fallen to the ground; and the Commission were right in declaring that our foreign trade had not been affected in the slightest degree by royalties. But there was another point. The hon. Member was very anxious to prove that royalties affected wages, and therefore strikes. He seems to think that if there were less royalties to pay or if his scheme was taken up strikes would be averted. The same argument applied in this case. What did wages depend upon? He imagined that they depended chiefly upon prices, and if royalty did not enter into the selling price of coal except to a very small extent, it could not enter into the question of wages either;

Mr. Griffith-Boscawen

therefore it was absurd to argue that if they abolished royalties strikes would be less frequent. The hon. Member opposite said that it was a monstrous thing on the part of a master to propose a reduction of wages whilst royalties were being paid. The hon. Member apparently did not know that in bad times royalties were reduced or taken off altogether. In the case of a poor mine in times of keen competition a lessor was nearly always ready to take a smaller royalty, because were he to refuse to do so the mine might have to be shut up, and then he would get no royalty at all. Abundant evidence of that was supplied by the Report of the Royal Commission. There was, for instance, the evidence of Mr. Evans, representing the miners of the Rhondda Valley, who stated that he knew a colliery where the dead rent had been reduced from £4,000 to £1,000 a year, and where the landlord wiped out a debt of £22,000 and reduced the royalty to 5d. He did not attempt to prove that under this system everything went right, but a certain latitude was given by it by which it was possible for the royalty to be reduced in a few particular cases, which would enable these cases to carry on; whereas if there was a uniform system, and they had to deal with the State instead of private individuals, the chances were that the royalty would not be reduced in these particular cases, and these mines would have to shut up in consequence of bad times. But it was absurd to contend that royalties were the cause of the closure of mines. Bad times were the result of over-production, and then some mines must close, whether they paid royalties or not. Supposing that all royalties were abolished, what would happen? Immediately those mines which were in a disadvantageous position, and paid less royalty, would be unable to compete with the better placed mines, and they would have to stop at once. The result would be that the men working in these mines would be thrown out of work. That was a material point, and he put it forward in the interests of the miners. As to the proposal for the nationalisation of mines, the hon. Member told them that no less than 99 per cent. of the working miners were in favour of it, and that the Miners' Association had unanimously carried a resolution in favour of it. If that was the case he should like to ask the hon. Gentleman

how this paragraph appeared in the Report of the Commission—

"The suggestion for the nationalisation of minerals was not approved by most of the representatives of the miners. No such suggestion in favour of the nationalisation of minerals is made by any Association representing the lessees, and those witnesses whom we examined were in favour of the present law as to mineral property."

If these resolutions were carried how was it they did not come before the Royal Commission, which reported that most of the representatives of the miners were opposed to the proposal of nationalisation? He would like to ask the hon. Member what he meant by nationalisation? When he talked about the nationalisation of mines and minerals did he mean that the State was to take over the minerals and to lease the mines to those who now worked them? If so, the system of royalties would remain, the only change being that the State would have taken the place of the private owner. If the hon. Member meant that the State was to work the mines itself the cost to the taxpayers would be enormous. One witness before the Commission estimated it at £100,000,000. Then, if the State was to take over the mines or minerals, or both, compensation must be given, and it was difficult to see what advantage would accrue from such a procedure. Of course, if compensation were not given, then it was simply a piece of robbery, and, to use a parallel with the hon. Member's remark, the most monstrous thing that had happened since the Government introduced the Resolution for dealing with Scotch Bills. The hon. Member, however, held a different view, and he said he would except some rights. He said, for instance, that where private individuals in days gone by stole a mine he did not see why they now should not steal it back. If the hon. Member was going to set himself up to prove where a man had stolen a mine and successfully carried out that purpose he would have accomplished more than the Commission were able to do. They must either give compensation or not. If they did, the State would simply buy people out and would have to raise that amount of money, and then, he supposed, work the mines at a profit to itself. If they did not give compensation then it was sheer robbery, and he failed to understand why they should be asked by the hon. Member to rob one class of property and

should not be asked at the same time to rob every other class. He quite failed to see that any distinction could be drawn between property in minerals and other kinds of property. Before the Commission one of the miners' representatives stated that there were working men who bought land, subject to mineral rights, for building or for agricultural purposes. Where working men had bought land in mineral districts was their property in the minerals to be taken from them without payment? The Report of the Commission was adverse to nationalisation, and he trusted that the House would take the same view. As the Commissioners pointed out, there were, of course, some defects in the present system, but they could be removed by legislation? On the subject of wayleaves, for example, the Commissioners made several valuable suggestions. The Report of the Commission dealt one by one with the objections to the present system, and made recommendations which he thought the House would be well advised in carrying out. He asked the House, therefore, not to pass the Resolution, but to adopt his Amendment, which he hoped might be the machinery of really useful, practical, and beneficent legislation.

Mr. DODD (Essex, Maldon) thought that the particular form which the Resolution had taken was due probably to the recent occurrences in Yorkshire, which had the effect of paralysing for a considerable period a great deal of the trade of England, and necessarily called public attention to the question of property in minerals and the way in which private owners had used their proprietary rights. He thought his hon. Friends, however, had somewhat misunderstood the use of a Resolution of this House. The hon. Member who seconded the Resolution told them that the value of it was that it would draw attention to a particular subject. He, for one, protested against the House of Commons being regarded as a species of elevated discussion forum for bringing forward matters in no sense ripe for legislation. The Resolution suggested that this House was of opinion that the time had arrived when mining rents and wayleaves should be acquired by the State. That was a question of enormous importance, and one upon which it was very possible to hold very varying

opinions. As to one part of that sentence—namely, as to whether the time had arrived at which the State should make this purchase there could be but one opinion. Although they did not know what the contents of the coming Budget would be, yet they knew enough to feel perfectly certain that the financial condition of the country was not such as to enable them to enter into very large commercial transactions or speculations at the present moment. He therefore regretted the insertion of the concluding part of the Resolution, because he thoroughly agreed with the former part of it. Although many of them might think the Royal Commissioners might have gone further in some of their recommendations, yet those that they had made were very important, and were such that the House would do well to give effect to in legislation at the earliest possible moment. As he had said, he should like to have seen the Resolution limited to the earlier part of it, and the portion which dealt with the great question of the nationalisation of mines omitted from it, because he thought they might probably have been able to pass the first part of the Resolution, and have done something to be of use. If he understood their procedure correctly, when that House passed a Resolution by a majority and the Government assented to the Resolution, it was intended that the Government should give effect to the opinion of the House by bringing in legislation to carry out the Resolution of the House. He did not suppose that even the most advanced Member of the Government was prepared with a scheme to buy the whole of the mineral property of this country, and he was quite sure most of their supporters would be very much surprised if the Leader of the House were to introduce any scheme of the kind at the present moment. Having referred to the recommendations of the Commission as to wayleaves, and expressed his concurrence with their suggestions, the hon. Member said the recommendation to which he wished to draw particular attention was the one where the Commissioners, in effect, advised that some tribunal should be established which should be enabled to fix a fair sum in respect to wayleaves where the parties were unable to determine the price, and to deal with the various disputes and diffi-

culties that arose between the owner of the minerals and the person who was working the mineral property. The Commissioners seemed to think there should be some commercial tribunal established to deal with difficulties as to royalties and wayleaves. One of the great difficulties they had in this country was that experienced in their Courts in dealing with commercial matters. He did not know whether it was that lawyers were Constitutionally unable to deal, as a general rule, satisfactorily with commercial difficulties; but whether dealing with railway rates, Railway Commissions, or ordinary commercial cases, it was a sad fact that the commercial community had, to a certain extent, withdrawn their confidence from the Courts of Law. He regretted that this should be so. The recommendation of the Commission pointed to what he had long thought a necessity in this country, and that was something in the nature of a commercial tribunal which would deal with matters such as wayleaves, disputes as to mining royalties, and various other commercial questions. He was glad that this Resolution had been brought forward—though he objected strongly to the form—because it would give an opportunity to those hon. Members familiar with mining matters to emphasise the valuable recommendations which had been made by the Commissioners. He should be glad if the Resolution could be so altered in form as to enable it to be adopted by the Government, who could then direct their attention to the recommendations made by the Royal Commissioners, so that the mining industry of the country might at once obtain some relief which would be of benefit to it. Most of them thought that it was more important at the present time in the mining as well as in other industries to do something which would be of value and help to the commercial community rather than that they should speculate with regard to speculative matters such as the nationalisation of land and the State purchase of mines, and that they should use their time in something practical and useful instead of in discussing questions which at present, at any rate, were not ripe for legislation.

*MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) said, that as the only Member of the Royal Commission present in the House, he

should like to occupy its attention for a few minutes. He regretted the absence of the hon. Members for Morpeth and Rhondda, who were most valuable members of that Mining Commission, who attended to its deliberations and evidence most carefully, and who, like all the other members of the Commission, signed with absolute unanimity the Report which had been laid before the House. The hon. Member who spoke first was inclined to quarrel with the Report of the Commission because it was unanimous, and imputed weakness to the Royal Commissioners because they did not recommend drastic changes, and because there was no Minority Report. Might he suggest that the unanimity of the Report was due to the strength of the evidence which the Commission received, and not to the weakness of the Commissioners. What he wanted to say was that the unanimity of the Commission was remarkable. The Commission as constituted was a many-sided Commission. The three interests mainly involved—those of the mineral owners, the coal owners, and the working miners—were represented on the Commission, but he did not hesitate to say that of these three interests the one most strongly represented, not merely numerically, but also intellectually and by practical experience, was the interest of the working miners. But besides the representatives of the miners, the Commission included Mr. David Dale, Professor Munroe, and Mr. Reddington, the well-known Irish Nationalist; and if a Commission composed of such diverse elements could come to a unanimous conclusion, surely the inference to be drawn was not that the evidence was in the direction which the hon. Member suggested, but that it must have been overwhelming in the other direction. No complaint was made by the lessees, or by the organisations of the lessees, to the Commission against the working of the present system as a whole, although there were complaints in individual cases of excessive royalties being exacted. The Commission would have liked to see the system of a sliding scale in mining royalties universally applied, and it was noteworthy that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the largest owners of minerals in England, had in all their recent leases introduced the sliding scale, which worked with

more apparent equity than a fixed mining royalty. In bad times the mineral owners suffered with others, and had to lighten their demand. The miners hoped that if the State took possession of the mines there would be a larger production of coal in the country, but he thought the facts and the evidence given before the Commission proved most conclusively that, under the present system, the production of coal in this country had been extraordinarily rapid and progressive. The rate of production of coal in Great Britain was enormously in excess of that in Belgium, Germany, and France, where the State owned the minerals, the increase in the United Kingdom in 10 years being greater than the total production in France and Belgium, and equal to one-half the production in Germany. It was, therefore, impossible to believe, in the face of these figures, that the present system tended to check production in Great Britain. This was not the only country in which there was private ownership of minerals. The system had been adopted in the United States and in all our Colonies, and in the United States there had in the last 20 or 30 years been a most extraordinary development of mining industry, notwithstanding the fact that the royalties paid in the United States were higher than those paid in the United Kingdom. There had been no sort of movement in the United States against the system. The evidence from there was all in favour of private ownership. It was not the fact that the present system of royalties injuriously affected miners' wages. In 1890 the average wage of the miner in France was £53; in Belgium it was £48; in Germany, £53; while in this country it was £71, and it must be remembered that the miners in this country worked under better conditions than those abroad. The Royal Commission reported in favour of the present system, but did not enter upon a detailed consideration of the practicability or possibility of the nationalisation of minerals, because, in their judgment, no sufficiently definite scheme to that end was brought to their notice. But, as such a scheme had been indicated by the hon. Member for the Ince Division, he asserted unhesitatingly that Conservatives of all kinds of opinion had very strong theo-

retical and practical objections to any scheme which would add to the responsibilities of the State in this vast industry. He hoped that the Amendment would be supported, and that the Government would speedily give effect to the positive recommendations of the Commission.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I do not think any hon. Member can complain that the hon. Member for Ince has introduced such an important topic, and one so well worthy the consideration of the House, or of the Amendment which has been moved by the hon. Member opposite in what we must regard as a temperate speech. But we cannot treat a Resolution such as my hon. Friend has proposed as a mere expression of opinion; we must deal with it as a practical proposal which, if the Government assented to it and the House approved it, it would be the duty of Parliament to carry out. My hon. Friend makes in his Resolution the definite statement

"that the time has arrived when such rents and wayleaves should be acquired by the State."

The proposal deals with a matter which has formed the subject of a long and laborious investigation by a particularly able Royal Commission, which was composed with the greatest impartiality. Three members of that Commission are well-known as having been practically working miners themselves, and as having been associated for years with the representation of the miners' interest in and out of the House of Commons. The Commission presented a unanimous Report, and my hon. Friend asks us to reverse that unanimous finding. That is a very strong position for any Member of the House to take up. I am to a considerable extent in sympathy not only with the general object of his view, but with the point of view from which he approaches the question. I think it was a misfortune that the State lost its control over the minerals, and I cannot help thinking that, if the transfer had not taken place, we should now have found ourselves in possession as a community not only of a very valuable source of revenue, but of the means to control a large industry upon which the prosperity and welfare of the nation and its commercial predominance must largely depend.

But it is no use lamenting what has taken place in the past. What we have to do is to deal with the actual situation, and I ask my hon. Friend to consider what his proposal amounts to. I would ask what is the proposal of the hon. Gentleman? According to the Report of the Commission, the rents and wayleaves with which he proposes to deal amount, at this moment, to the annual sum of about £5,000,000 sterling. It is obvious that unless the State acquires the mining of minerals not only open, but unopen, throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain and Ireland, you would only be dealing with the matter piecemeal, and you would have, side by side with State ownership, private ownership. What does that amount to? It amounts, in the opinion of the best and most sober-minded authorities, to a capital expenditure of £150,000,000 sterling. My hon. Friend may dispute my figures upon the ground that the £150,000,000 sterling—I am only using rough figures—will only be needed if you compensate the existing owners on what he would regard as extravagant terms. I followed with great care what my hon. Friend said on this point, but I am not sure I altogether understand his position. He said he would give compensation where the present owner can prove his title by purchase or some other legitimate means. I understand a man proving his title by purchase, but what are the other legitimate means to which he refers? Suppose the origin of a man's title, which may have come from his grandfather or father, or which may have been continued in his family for generations and centuries, is lost in obscurity, and that it is impossible at this distance of time to prove that his title had what I may call an honourable origin, then arises the serious question, Is he or is he not to be compensated? If the State is to step in it must be on the terms of paying fair and reasonable compensation to those who are at present entitled; and the moment you have established that principle you land yourselves, as I say, in a capital expenditure which would be something like a quarter or more than a quarter of our National Debt. I ask my hon. Friend what profit the State would derive from the transaction; how would it recoup itself? I do not think any case whatever has been made out for the proposed change. I am not going

to use my own words in such a matter when I find, as I do in this Report, a most careful analysis of the evidence by a man in whose judgment I place every confidence—the hon. Member for Morpeth, whose absence is due to the fact that he has gone to Newcastle to take part in the formation of a Wage Board for Northumberland and Durham, and not to any disposition on his part to shrink from the full responsibility of his position. After stating that the lessees had practically made no complaint whatever of the royalty system, the hon. Member (Mr. Burt) said that the Commissioners went on to say that, on the other hand, some of the representatives of the miners did urge that, owing to the inability or unwillingness of the mine-owners to reduce the royalties, wages had fallen, strikes had been caused, and collieries had been closed. What do the Commissioners say? That—

“The witnesses, however, frankly admitted that their information upon the subject was imperfect, as they had not the means of knowing accurately the transactions between lessors and lessees. We entertain no doubt of the good faith of their representations, and we endeavoured to ascertain the facts in respect to the particular cases cited. We found that in some of them the real cause of the stoppage of the mines in question was not the pressure of royalties. It would be occupying too much space in our Report to enter into the details of these cases, but a summary of the evidence with regard to them will be found in Appendix IV. Without going so far as to say that no such cases have occurred, we believe that they have been extremely rare, and that where mines have been closed it has generally arisen from other causes than excessive royalties. Mr. R. Young, whom we examined as the representative of the Northumberland miners, said truly that ‘lessors generally find it to their advantage to reduce royalties when they find that a reduction is absolutely necessary for the continued working of the mines.’”

Those are the facts under the existing system, as the Report has pointed out. Do not let it be supposed that I or the Government in whose name I speak are in any way blind to the defects of the existing system, which the Report has pointed out, or that we will show any slackness in giving effect to the recommendations of the Commission on the subject. I myself take the view strongly that where you have, in an industry such as mining, three different interests—the interest of the owner of the raw material, if I may so call it; the interest of the capitalist who is working the raw material; and the interest of the miner who is

actually engaged in hewing or winning it—and where from unforeseen causes the profits fall, the burden of the loss ought to be equally distributed among the various interests concerned. I think the system under which one of these interests escapes scot-free while the other two have to divide between them the whole burden is a system that is not reconcilable with justice or with common sense. I think there are cases, I do not say they are very common, but they are sufficiently numerous to be well worthy the attention of Parliament, in which under the existing system the royalty owner does escape. Unfortunately, it has been the practice in many of our mining districts, at any rate, to have a fixed royalty—a dead rent first of all, and then a royalty if the amount raised exceeds the amount of the dead rent—going on for 30 or 40 or 50 years, with no provision in the lease for anything that might happen in the interval. A very great authority, one of the greatest in the country (Sir Lowthian Bell), said that in his opinion it would be very much better to have a sliding scale than to have this system of fixed royalties. I believe that to be the opinion and experience of a very large number of colliery owners in Great Britain. I do not say that is a matter in which Parliament can compulsorily interfere, but I cannot help thinking the adoption of the sliding scale instead of the mechanical rule of dead rent and fixed royalty would very largely ease mining transactions, and tend to shift the burden to where it ought in fairness and equity to be. That possibly is a matter beyond the power of Parliament to deal with, but there are other matters which are not to which the Commissioners have referred. I will only state two or three of them very briefly. In the first place, I think it is pre-eminently necessary, where you have a dead rent, and where the lessee, working with reasonable skill and energy, is unable to produce an amount of coal in the year sufficient to work out that dead rent—a case of what is technically known as “shorts”—but where he is entitled to recoup himself in the succeeding year for that deficiency, then, when you come to the end of the lease, the mine owner ought not to be allowed to keep in his pocket the amount of royalty which, in fact, has been overpaid through the inability of the lessee

to work it out. I agree with the recommendation of the Commissioners that there should be established some tribunal—I do not say how it should be constituted—to which, in cases of this kind, reference might be made in order that that great injustice might be prevented. It is a more doubtful and disputable question whether there should be power in the same tribunal to permit temporary reductions in cases of unforeseen calamity or accident. That, also, is a matter well worthy the consideration of the Legislature. There is a third point in which the Commissioners, I am glad to see, expressed a clear and unfaltering judgment, to which I attach great importance—namely, that there should be no unreasonable restriction allowed by law to the free alienation of mining leases. A mining lease is quite a different thing from an agricultural lease. Although in form it is a lease, it is in fact a purchase. A lessee who has thus effected a purchase should have the same free disposition of his property as an ordinary purchaser of land has, and should not be subject to unreasonable refusals on the part of the lessor to permit him to assign his interest. All those points are well worthy of consideration with the view to legislation. I agree entirely with my hon. Friend (Mr. Woods) in what he has said on the subject of wayleaves. I think a clear case has been made out on the evidence before the Commission for legislating with regard to the existing system of wayleaves. I see no difference whatever in principle between the compulsory powers which this House constantly allows to Railway Companies, and other undertakings which require to be incorporated by Act of Parliament, and the case of the private owners or private undertakers who are carrying out an industry so important to the community as the mining industry. When it is shown that the owner solely by the unreasonable and arbitrary use of his monopoly prevents the mining lessee from getting that access which he needs, and without which he cannot get his goods to the market, I think the Legislature may very well step in and give some independent Public Authority power to obtain for him that which the landlord will not grant spontaneously; and the tribunal to which I have referred, the composition of which the Commissioners hint at, might very well be entrusted with cases such as

this. I do not propose to say more. I think I have indicated, so far as the Government are concerned, that they will at the earliest opportunity that the exigencies of Public Business allows be prepared to give full and even liberal effect to the unanimous recommendations of this most important Commission. We ask the House in a matter of this kind to give weight to the ripe and deliberate judgment of the Commission to whom it has been deputed, and when that body has pronounced its decision not to go behind that decision. We ask the House not, by its vote to-night, to embark on a very large and speculative scheme the limits of which it is impossible to foresee, and for which no sufficient case has been made out by the speech of my hon. Friend who brought forward this Motion. The Government, therefore, ask the House to negative the Motion in the form in which it appears on the Paper. I trust that after what I have said my hon. Friend may see that we have no want of sympathy with the real grievances which he has brought forward.

*MR. MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.) said, it would be useless for the House to devolve inquiries to Commissions if after a full and impartial investigation hon. Members were to ask the House to go behind the Report. Recognising the responsibility of the House in that respect, he must say, though he admired the speech to which they had listened, he regretted that after the careful and fair inquiry of the Commission the hon. Member should have brought this Motion before the House. If that course was to be taken it would be worse than useless to appoint Commissions of this kind. In the appointment of the Commission the utmost care was taken to secure the most thorough impartiality, and to insure that every view would be patiently considered, and that every effort would be made to arrive at a sound conclusion. Now the House was asked, as the result of a few hours' Debate, to reverse the finding of the Commission, and if that course were taken it would, in his opinion, be worse than useless to spend public time and public revenue in conducting such inquiries in future. He did not want unnecessarily to prolong this discussion and would only say he believed that the argument of the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Woods) that royalties hampered trade and gave foreigners an undue ad-

vantage in competing with us was unsound and absolutely groundless. It was untrue to say that royalties could have any operation whatever in the direction of raising prices; prices of all commodities were determined by considerations totally apart from any royalty that might be paid. Had the hon. Member satisfied the House that foreigners paid no royalties? In point of fact, royalties in some shape were a necessary consequence of the fact that the cost of production was less than the price obtainable in the market for the article produced. They must go into the pocket of somebody, and into whose pocket they went did not matter to the miner, whose wages were determined on other and independent considerations. There might have occurred cases, such as had been mentioned by the hon. Member for Ince, of lessees who had entered into foolish bargains, and had undertaken to pay higher royalties than they could pay, if they were also to pay fair wages; and in such cases the mines usually stopped. But there were plenty of cases in which owners worked their own mines, and therefore paid no royalties at all, and in such cases the men employed did not receive more than the average rate of wages. The Report of the Commission curiously gave illustrations in other countries, as in France, of high royalties concurring with high wages, and nominal royalties with wages below the average. The advance of wages where royalties were paid proved that royalties did not keep wages low. The grounds on which the appeal was made to the House failed, and hon. Members would appeal in vain. As to the proposed remedy, that the rights of mine-owners should be purchased by the State, he could add but little to what had been said by the Home Secretary; but it appeared to him that the sum of £150,000,000 was too low, and less than those rights would fetch in the market. The question was involved of what was to be done with the lessees; were they to be left in possession, some of them with leases for 40 or 50 years? Was the interest of the owners only to be touched, and not that of the lessees? It had been suggested that the State would deal more "humanely" than private owners in the remission of royalties in hard times; but at whose cost was this humanity to be exercised? Were the taxpayers to be asked to submit to extra

burdens in order to ease the conditions of competition in carrying on their business to wealthy men in times of difficulty? And these were men who had made bargains with all the foresight and judgment they could exercise. The House, it seemed to him, would shrink from relieving these men from the consequences of their bad bargains. That was a proposal to which he thought the House would not assent. Both in America and England the royalty system had been identified with the highest development of mining industry for the benefit of both capitalists and working men; and the facts seemed to furnish quite sufficient reason why we should not change our system for that of the Continent, where miners were less well off than they were here. It was with regret he heard the remark of the Home Secretary that when things went wrong in the mining industry the owner's interest went scot-free, and the lessees and miners had to bear the burden of the loss—that they had to bear all consequences. This, he believed, was not a correct representation of what occurred. It was true the owner received a dead rent and a royalty which was fixed, instead of being paid on a sliding scale; but this was because lessees preferred fixed charges to sliding scales. A lessee gained in fat years compensation for what he had to lose in lean years, and calculated that his average payments would not amount to more than he would have to pay under a sliding scale. There was the additional advantage that the annoyance and inconvenience were avoided of having to submit accounts of sales and prices in order to arrive at what would have to be paid on a sliding scale. The obligation to pay a dead rent had the effect of preventing a man from becoming a monopolist and holding a mine for the mere purpose of keeping someone else out—a result which it could not be desired to bring about by a change of system as proposed. It was better there should be some minimum dead rent fixed—some moderate amount, supposing the minerals to be worked reasonably. That was the great reason in favour of maintaining dead rents. It was a system of arrangement by mutual consent, and was satisfactory in all cases where fixed on the basis of reasonable working. Where the system had not worked satisfactorily it was not the fault of the system itself, but

the fact of particular lessees having arranged unsatisfactory terms. On all the grounds that had been urged he hoped the House would not entertain an impossible scheme for the nationalisation of our minerals.

MR. PRITCHARD MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil) said, he had on the Paper an Amendment in favour of

"The creation of a Mining Department to be presided over by a Minister of the Crown," and that such a Department was needed for the purpose of collecting and publishing accurate information with regard to mines and minerals. From this point of view it did not appear that the Report of the Commission had received any consideration from Her Majesty's Government. It was admitted on all sides that mining interests were vital to the country; and those engaged in the mining interests scarcely knew what official Departments they had to deal with. On the one hand they had to deal with landowners; and on the other they were concerned with various departments both at the Home Office and the Board of Trade. The time had arrived when not only the question of royalties but that of an eight hours day in mines and other questions relating to the mining industry should be under the control of one Department. This was not the first time he had made this suggestion to the House. It received favourable consideration three or four years ago, since when both the Miners' Federation and the London Chamber of Commons had passed unanimous resolutions in favour of it. The mineowner was at the mercy of the landowner, and yet could not pay good wages to the working miner, because he was handicapped through having to give a portion of his product to the owner of the land. It was clear, therefore, that royalties must affect wages. He was himself in favour of royalties, although he objected to the principle on which they were charged. They should be paid on the profits of an undertaking, and not on the product. In some of the Colonies compulsory powers were given to miners to carry on their industry. In England the miner could not compulsorily obtain a mining lease so as to give employment to labour, although compulsory powers were given to Local Bodies, and compulsory powers of purchase were also in existence in Ireland. As things were at present,

the man who wanted to employ his capital in mining had to go hat in hand to the landowner, who of course insisted upon having all his conditions performed and fulfilled. When the unfortunate miner had got a lease he was met by those in authority with the remark, "You had no right to take that lease. If you do not like its conditions you ought not to have taken it." The miner, however, who wanted to employ his capital and also to give employment to his fellow man had to submit to the state of things as they existed. In other countries where there were Ministers of Mines a dispute about royalties was settled by the Minister of Mines. He read that afternoon in *The St. James' Gazette* that another great strike was threatened, and that at an enormous meeting of miners at Nottingham a violent attack had been made on Lord Shand, who had kindly undertaken to perform some very onerous duties. During the last strike or lock-out it was found necessary to get the present Premier to endeavour to throw oil upon the troubled waters. They were now again apparently in a very serious condition with regard to the miners. If all questions in dispute could be considered by some proper tribunal, responsible to the House of Commons, something like relief from the disorder which now continually prevailed might be secured. He believed that the effect which the present system of royalties had upon industry was not known to the House as it should be. Only that morning a letter reached him from the manager of a well-known slate quarry. In this letter the following passage occurred:—

"I maintain that the value of the raw material in slate quarries does not average more than 10s. per ton, and as the average royalty per ton comes to about 2s. 6d., it follows that the royalty is about 25 per cent. of the value of the raw material."

He himself knew a very promising sulphur mine in North Wales where 25 or 30 men were at work. Sulphur could be brought from Italy and landed in this country at a cost of about 9s. 6d. a ton, and yet the owner of the sulphur mine in North Wales charged a royalty of 2s. 6d. a ton. If he would only knock off 1s. a ton, the mine could employ 100 or 200 men. The owner of the mine was a noble Lord who, he supposed, had never been in the district, and his agents

no doubt considered it to be their duty to obtain the highest possible terms. He would suggest that if the Government did not like to go to the expense of having a separate portfolio for the Ministry of Mines, they should make the Minister for Agriculture the Minister for Mines as well.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said, the hon. Member for Ince (Mr. Woods) had made two or three statements with regard to mining royalties which were not quite accurate. In the first place, the hon. Member said that the mining royalties in this country amounted to 8d. per ton. It was a well-known fact that the average mining royalty in South Wales did not amount to more than 5½d. per ton. As to fortunes having been made out of mining royalties, such a thing had never occurred. With regard to wayleaves, he admitted that some alteration, such as the constitution of a new Department like the French Tribunal de Commerce, would be an excellent thing. The hon. Member for Ince (Mr. Woods) did not seem to have known much about the state of things in foreign countries, inasmuch as he had compared mining royalties in this country with those in France, Germany, Austria, and Belgium. France had no mining royalties at all. The State conceded the land to the miners, and the concessionaires then had to pay an *octroi* and other dues, amounting to a total taxation of something like two francs a ton. According to the Royal Commissioners' Report, the total amount of coal got in the United Kingdom was upwards of 38,000,000 tons, whilst in France it was only 6,000,000, in Belgium 2,000,000, and in Germany 23,000,000. Therefore, the whole of the coal produced in France, Belgium, and Germany only amounted to about 32,000,000 tons, or less than the production of Great Britain. It stood to reason that if the non-royalties system were more favourable to France, Germany, and Belgium than the royalties system was to this country, the output of coal would be much greater, especially when it was borne in mind that the hours of labour were much greater on the Continent than in Great Britain, whilst the wages were considerably lower. With reference to the question of leasing, he might say that he had never yet granted a lease which did not contain a clause providing that the lessee should have

the power of transferring it to anybody else, and the transfer of such leases had always taken place without the smallest objection, providing that the transferees were respectable and substantial people. Nobody, of course, would dream of transferring a lease to a man of straw. He did not believe that in the whole of South Wales could be found a single instance in which permission had been refused to the transfer of a lease. He himself was constantly in South Wales, and he thought he had a thorough knowledge of the country, so that his statement was not made without experience. He had listened with a great deal of pleasure to the speech made by the Home Secretary (Mr. Asquith). He hoped and trusted that the Mover and Seconded of the Resolution would take the right hon. Gentleman's very pregnant remarks to heart, and would abandon the scheme referred to in their Resolution, but, at the same time, that the outcome of the discussion would be the constitution of Tribunals of Commerce before which all matters in dispute might be taken, and which might prevent the recurrence of the terrible effects of strikes from which the country had suffered so shockingly in recent times.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) said, he should not have troubled the House had it not been for the fact that, satisfactory as were some of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Royal Commission, he shared a strong conviction with not a few of his constituents that, as far as Cornwall was concerned, these recommendations were lamentably deficient. He did not wish to raise the question in the interests of one class. He considered that, in a matter of this kind the House was bound to regard from an equitable point of view the interests of all concerned—landowners, lessees, and working miners alike—and also to bear in mind that the interests of the community at large were at stake. All the minerals that were mined in Great Britain were absolutely essential to the prosperity of the whole of the country. The question the House had to consider was how it could best alter the present system, which had certainly not worked uniformly well. Three proposals had been put forward in the course of the Debate. The first was that of the hon. Member for Ince (Mr. Woods), who thought that mining

rents and royalties should be acquired by the State. The second was that of the hon. Member for the Tunbridge Division of Kent (Mr. Griffith-Boscawen), which simply desired the House to take its stand upon the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The third was that of the hon. Member for Merthyr (Mr. Pritchard Morgan), who was anxious to see established a Mining Department presided over by a Minister of the Crown. As regarded the first proposal, he (Mr. Conybeare) could not as a practical man shut his eyes to the convincing character of the logical arguments advanced against it by the Home Secretary. Theoretically, he (Mr. Conybeare) held that the minerals should belong to the State, but it was necessary to consider the practical limitations by which the House was bound in a matter of this kind, and he felt compelled to discard the proposal as being outside the range of practical politics. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Tunbridge was satisfactory as far as it went. It presented the usual mental attitude of the Tory—namely, that of taking one's stand upon that which existed, and accepting that which was presented to one without troubling to consider what was really the best course. He (Mr. Conybeare) was not content to take his stand on the recommendations of the Royal Commission as far as his own county of Cornwall was concerned. As to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Merthyr, he (Mr. Conybeare) thought that an important industry like that of mining ought to be adequately represented in the Government of the country, and, although he did not complain of any maladministration on the part of the Home Office, he was convinced that it was impossible for a Department which had a thousand other matters to look after to give satisfactory time, attention, and consideration to so gigantic a business as the mining industry of this country. He was therefore at one with the hon. Member for Merthyr in his proposal, and he thought he could show that it was very important to establish a tribunal, in addition to a Minister for Mines, with such powers as were outlined by the Home Secretary in the speech he had just delivered. He was the more pleased with the reference which the Home Secretary had

made in this respect, because it showed how they had progressed in the years that had gone by since he first entered the House. In his first Session the matter of mining royalties was argued, and at that time he believed he was practically alone in advocating the establishment of tribunals for the settlement of mining disputes, and the first Member who introduced a Bill to give effect to that proposal. He was glad to think that, whatever the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners might have been, they had now heard from the Home Secretary that he was entirely in favour of such a proposal, and he therefore hoped that the time was not far distant when the Government would be able to devote a little consideration to this matter. Though the Commissioners were unanimous, he happened to know that differences of opinion existed, for one of them had said to him—"If I had had my way, the recommendations would have been somewhat different." He believed that those who had the interests of Cornwall at heart would be agreed that the recommendations ought to have been different, so far as that county was concerned. The seventh recommendation stated that the Commissioners recommended for the favourable consideration of Parliament any measure which might be introduced, with the concurrence of all parties concerned, for dealing with mineral leases in Cornwall and Devonshire,

"Such as the Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. St. John Aubyn and Lord St. Levan in 1886."

In regard to that recommendation, he must complain that it was singularly inadequate, as contrasted with the proposal which the Home Secretary was in favour of—a special Court for mining questions. That Bill was defeated on the Second Reading, on the very ground that it was so ridiculously inadequate that it would not at all satisfy the wishes and claims of the people of Cornwall. He had the satisfaction of bringing about the defeat of Mr. St. John Aubyn on that ground, and it was an unworthy suggestion to make that they should go back to that defeated Bill. The evidence even of such staunch apologists of the landlord interest as Mr. Marriott, which was quoted in the final Report of the Commissioners, showed that this proposal was absolutely unsatisfactory. If the Home Secretary, when he came to consider this matter, would

study particularly the evidence connected with the county of Cornwall, he would find that witness after witness—well-known names in connection with the county—was in favour of the establishment of a Court of Arbitration. Those who drafted the Bill in 1886, who were his political opponents, would have nothing to do with a Court of Arbitration, but to-day practically every mining authority was in favour of it, and he asserted that it would be an insult to the county if that recommendation which had now been made should be taken as representing what the people of Cornwall desired and intended to have. He had introduced into the House during several Sessions a Bill embodying what he had reason to believe were the views of a great proportion, at any rate, of his own constituents in reference to this Court of Arbitration, and in the evidence which he gave before the Royal Commission the details were given as to the appointment of a Court representing all the three interests concerned—the mine-owners, the lessees, or “adventurers” as they were called in Cornwall, and the working miners. He made this suggestion to the Government: Cornwall had always been separately treated in these mining matters. Two hundred years ago they had a regular Parliament of their own, in which all matters connected with tenures were dealt with by representatives of different portions of the county, and he asked that they should be allowed to revert to the old practice. The Stannaries Court was now merely a sort of County Court, the principal officer holding an office which was almost a sinecure, and he thought it would be possible to establish a Court which would be representative of all the three classes interested, which would deal out equal justice, and which would probably be so successful that most of the other mining districts would be only too anxious to follow their example. With regard to the question of royalties, he considered that the nation ought to have an interest in them, and he did not see why there should be any difficulty in insisting that a portion of the royalties that now went into the pockets of private individuals should be the property of the nation. He thought it would be only fair that there should be a division of rates upon mines between the royalty-owner and the mine-owner, for the former at present bore none of

these exceedingly heavy charges. The late Home Secretary had talked about the lessees as being themselves to blame if they entered into foolish bargains; but those foolish bargains were in most cases thrust upon them. Mine-owners had formerly, and still had, the power to insist upon their own terms; they had practically absolute ownership, and so long as that absolute ownership was uncontrolled by such a Court as he had suggested, it would be in the power of individual mine-owners—if it was not true generally of their class—to impose whatever conditions they pleased upon the unfortunate lessees or “adventurers.” The right hon. Gentleman also contrasted the condition of the working miners of this country with that of the working miners abroad, and stated that the latter were worse off than our own countrymen, the wages here being higher than on the Continent, where the mines were more or less under the control of the State. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman was right as regarded the miners of France, Belgium and Germany, but as regarded the United States of America, Mexico, South America, and South Africa, he would find that men who were doing the same work there as the men in his own constituency in Cornwall were receiving as much as £12, £15, and even £20 a month, whereas the Cornwall miners were scarcely getting £4 a month. The evidence showed that there was a general consensus of opinion in Cornwall against royalties being fixed for a long term of years, and that was another matter which he recommended to the attention of the Government. He heartily thanked the Home Secretary for having given utterance to what he would describe as so advanced a programme in reference to this matter, as compared with what they were struggling for some years ago in regard to the establishment of a tribunal to deal with all these questions.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerstone), who was received with cries of “Divide!” said, he was quite aware that the House was anxious for a Division; but this was a very important question, and ought not to be disposed of in the summary manner that some hon. Members seemed to desire. He would have liked to have had an opportunity of speaking at some length, because it was a subject of the utmost importance to the working classes throughout the country;

but he would not detain the House long. He was very glad that an opportunity had been found of introducing this subject and raising even a brief discussion upon it, because he had noticed that for years past, so far as the working-class electors in the towns were concerned, there was a strong and growing opinion upon the question, and they were exceedingly anxious that an effort should be made to find some solution for the problem. He had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for the Tunbridge Division of Kent, in which he stated that he could not see the slightest difference between property in minerals and property of any other kind. If the hon. Member failed to discover the difference, and would consult the intelligent artisans of the towns, in their clubs and political organisations, they would soon tell him the difference, which was that one was the gift of nature and the other was the product of human industry. The Home Secretary had told them that he was very sorry the nation had ever parted with its interest in the mineral wealth of the Kingdom. But he remembered that, not more than three years since, the House was afforded an opportunity of introducing the very principle, the recognition of which his hon. Friend now contended for, into a Constitution which was then being discussed in this House—namely, the Constitution of Western Australia. At that time he (Mr. Cremer) moved an Amendment that the Government of that country should give effect to the very principle now contended for, and retain as public property the mineral wealth of the colony, but the Home Secretary was not one of those who went into the Lobby and supported that Amendment. The Home Secretary and other speakers had told them that the nation could only acquire the mineral wealth of the Kingdom by an expenditure of £150,000,000 or by confiscation. But there was an alternative proposal which he had frequently heard discussed by working men—namely, that this House should notify the owners of land and mines that the time had arrived when the State was determined to resume its proprietary rights in the soil and minerals, giving the possessors of land and royalties simply a life interest therein. He believed that was a solution which was favoured by

the most intelligent artisans in the country, and he felt satisfied that such a Resolution would be introduced into and passed by this House at no distant date. This was a scheme which found favour out of doors when the question of old age pensions was under consideration. It was no doubt difficult to decide where the money should come from to provide those old age pensions; but it was thought that when the State had resumed its proprietary rights in the mineral wealth of the Kingdom, and the £5,000,000 which were now pocketed by landlords as mining royalties had been placed at the disposal of the nation, that the amount would be almost sufficient to pay old age pensions. He knew that the word “confiscation” was an ugly one, but he did not think the working classes were likely to be frightened by it, because they knew that a system of legal robbery had been in existence for generations past in the abominable system of leaseholds which enabled landlords to compel people to pay heavy ground rents for the privilege of building houses upon land which had previously been worth next to nothing, and then at the end of the lease appropriating the bricks and mortar and labour and capital and skill of the industrial classes. As the clock pointed to the hour of 8, he would not further prolong the discussion.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 150; Noes 43.—(Division List, No. 18.)

Main Question, “That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,” again proposed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. J. MORLEY: By the indulgence of the House I should like to correct a statement which I made earlier this afternoon. I intimated that the Motion which my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House would make on Monday in reference to the Business of the House would be limited to Whitsuntide. The Motion which my right hon. Friend will make will be to give priority to Government Business on Tuesdays and Morning Sittings on Fridays, not merely up to Whitsuntide but up to the end of the Session.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at ten minutes after Eight o'clock till Monday next.

Mr. Cremer

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 9th April 1894.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Tweedmouth, after the death of his father.

THE BEAUMARIS SCHEME.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY said, in accordance with private notice which he had given, he desired to ask the Lord President whether the Beaumaris Scheme had been printed, and if not when it would be laid before the House?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The EARL OF ROSEBURY): I understand it will be printed and circulated to the Members of the House this afternoon.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 9.)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Message from the Commons that they concur in the Resolution of this House communicated to them on the 19th of March last on the subject of Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills as desired by this House.

PISTOLS BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to regulate the sale and use of pistols—Was presented by the Lord Stanley of Alderley; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 11.)

CHARITABLE TRUSTS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Charitable Trusts Acts—Was presented by the Lord Halsbury; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 12.)

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law relating to the limitation of actions—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Monday next. (No. 13.)

VOL. XXII. [FOURTH SERIES.]

LAW OF INHERITANCE AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law of inheritance to real property—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Monday next. (No. 14.)

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 9th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

FOOTPATHS IN THE ISLAND OF LEWIS.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to a Petition signed by 15 heads of families at Calbost, Park, Lochs, Lewis, in which it is stated that the Planasker (or Marvig) School, which was built for this district, is about two miles from the township they represent, in which there are fully 40 children of school age; that, since the erection of said school house, children have had to walk that distance through rough ground in all weathers; that last year an attempt was made by the County Council to construct a footpath from the township to the school, but from want of funds it was not completed; and that during the past inclement winter the parents unanimously agreed to keep their children from school, and no child has attended school from the township since the beginning of February; and whether, if these statements are confirmed upon inquiry, steps will be taken to remedy the existing state of matters? The hon. Member complained that after the words "rough ground" the words "and swampy bogs," inserted in the question as handed in at the Table, had been omitted.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): My attention has not been called to the Petition referred to, but I have nothing to add to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member on the 22nd

of March, in reply to a similar question. While it is the practice of the Scotch Education Department to call the attention of School Boards to the necessity of securing regular attendance, yet it rests with the School Boards, and not with the Department, to enforce the compulsory clauses.

ALLEGED ASSAULT BY A LEWIS SCHOOLMASTER.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will cause inquiry to be made into a case of alleged assault, on 13th January last, by the schoolmaster of Knockindue School, Keose, Lochs, Island of Lewis, upon a boy, aged 13 years, a pupil of that school, reported to the Procurator Fiscal for the Island of Lewis; whether he is aware that the Procurator Fiscal, in making inquiry into the case, sought no information from the parents, or from the doctor who attended the boy and dressed his wounds; that he referred the parents to the School Board of which he, the Procurator Fiscal, is clerk; and that he never brought the case before the School Board; whether he will state what other offices the Fiscal holds; the amount of his commissions, fees, or allowances from private parties for prosecutions for the year ending the 31st of March, 1893; and on what transactions these commissions, fees, or allowances were paid; and whether he is aware that many children in the district are not attending school, whilst the School Board take no notice of the fact?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I am informed by the Procurator Fiscal that he carefully investigated the allegations of undue severity towards pupils made against the head master of Knockindue Public School, and deemed it advisable to institute proceedings. After an exhaustive trial before the Sheriff of Ross and Cromarty, in the course of which he heard evidence from school children, parents, the compulsory attendance officer, the parish doctor and Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, the headmaster was acquitted. I think it right to add that the Inspector of Schools gave testimony in his evidence to the efficiency and success of the head master; and I understand that the attendance at Knockindue School is about the best in the parish. The Fiscal holds under autho-

rity from the Sheriff the offices of clerk to the School Board of Lews, and the office of Secretary to the Piers and Harbours Commissioners. During the year ended the 31st of March, 1893, he did not conduct any prosecution on behalf of private parties, and he received no commissions, fees or allowances in respect of any such prosecutions. The School Board and managers intimated before the trial their willingness to hear the complainants at the first meeting of the new School Board which was recently elected. That meeting takes place to day.

MR. WEIR gave notice that he would call attention to the matter on the Estimates.

REPORTED WRECK OFF WARREN HASTINGS ISLAND.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to a Report made at Vancouver by Captain Tullock, of the *British General*, to the effect that he had been boarded off Warren Hastings Island in December last by natives, who reported the loss of a large vessel there several months previously, and gave up a quadrant belonging to the vessel; that there was reason to believe that the vessel was either the *Morayshire* or the *Blair Athol*, both of which, bound from Java to Vancouver, have been missing since last summer; and that, in his opinion, a search should be made on the island; and whether, in the interest of the Merchant Navy and the relatives of the officers and crews of the missing vessels, it will be possible for one of the Queen's ships to visit the island and make inquiries?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The first information we have received is from my hon. Friend. The newspaper reports are somewhat conflicting, and we cannot say what action may be desirable till we have received further information from the owners of the *British General*, to whom a telegram has been sent to-day by the Admiralty.

FRAUDS IN THE MEAT TRADE.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the President of

the Board of Agriculture whether Her Majesty's Government will favourably consider the recommendations of the Committee of the House of Lords on the marking of foreign meat—namely, that every dealer in this class of meat should be required to register himself as such, and to affix a notice over his shop intimating that he is a registered dealer in that commodity, also that inspection should be made of retail butchers' shops by duly qualified Inspectors to secure compliance with these conditions?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I understand that the recommendations to which my hon. Friend refers are embodied in the Bill standing in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for the South Molton Division. We shall give very careful consideration to the arguments advanced in support of that Bill should an opportunity for its discussion arise; but Her Majesty's Government are not satisfied either that further legislation is necessary, or that the adoption of the proposals of the Committee would be of any real benefit to home producers, and they are, therefore, not disposed themselves to initiate legislation on the subject.

METROPOLITAN COUNTERMEN AND TELEGRAPH CLERKS.

MR. BUTCHER (York): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has had an opportunity of considering a Petition of the Metropolitan Districts Countermen and Telegraph Clerks, dated the 28th of February, 1893, and having reference to the conditions of their annual leave, and whether a reply to such Petition may shortly be expected; and whether he has had an opportunity of considering a Petition of the Metropolitan Districts Countermen and Telegraph Clerks, which was presented on the 16th of May, 1883, having reference to their duties and pay, and whether a reply to such Petition may shortly be expected?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The Petition of the 28th of February from the countermen and telegraphists in the Metropolitan District was duly considered, but before an answer could be sent the Petition of the 16th of May, 1893, which raised the whole question of the conditions of employment of these officers,

was received, and it was thought best to deal with the two Petitions together. The subjects dealt with by these Petitions are still under consideration, but I hope shortly to be able to reply to the Memorialists.

DINGWALL GAME PROSECUTIONS.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been called to the conviction of Wm. Mackenzie, Ardneaskan, by Sheriff Hill, at Dingwall, on the 13th of February, 1894, on a charge of trespassing in pursuit of game on the estate of Baron Middleton, of Applecross, on the 9th of January last, on the sole evidence of a game watcher, who admitted that he was not at any time within 40 yards of the accused; whether he is aware that other witnesses in their evidence showed that it was a physical impossibility for Mackenzie to be at the place at the time mentioned; and whether steps will be taken to amend the Law of Evidence, in order to make it obligatory that the evidence of at least two witnesses shall be taken to justify conviction?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): I answered this question so far on Tuesday last. On further inquiry I find that the watcher had previously known the accused, that on the day in question he had had him in view for three hours, and had, therefore, full opportunity of identifying him. It is the fact that the watcher was never nearer to him than 40 yards; but at this distance they had some conversation, and the accused, after shooting the watcher's dog dead, threatened to shoot the watcher himself. The evidence of the only witness, who stated that it was impossible for the accused to be at the place at the time mentioned, failed upon cross-examination; and that even taking the watcher's own statement, it was quite possible for him to have done all that was alleged. There have been cases which have shown the desirability of an amendment of the Day Trespass Act, but I doubt whether this is one of them.

KILLARNEY UNION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the auditor of the Local Government Board

has recently made any Report as to the financial condition of the Killarney Union, and if he can give the substance thereof; whether it is true that £5,031 of the poor rate remained uncollected at the close of the year, and that £2,122 of the seed rate was still outstanding; and if he can state what the Local Government Board propose to do in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am informed that the Auditor's Report in the case of the Killarney Union was entered on the Union Ledger and submitted to the Board of Guardians in ordinary course. The Report was published in the local newspapers, from which the hon. Gentleman can obtain the information he desires in answer to the first paragraph. As regards the second paragraph, I understand that on the 24th of March the outstanding balances in respect of poor rate and seed rate had been reduced to £3,966 and £2,037 respectively. The Local Government Board have addressed a communication to the Guardians warning the collectors that unless their collections were brought to a satisfactory close within a specified period they would find it necessary to remove them from office.

THE SLANEY FISHERIES.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought to his notice that, under the bye-laws of the Conservancy Board which regulate the close time for fishing in the Slaney, the net fishermen are placed at a disadvantage in taking salmon, as compared with the anglers in that river and the net fishermen in neighbouring rivers; whether he is aware that the fishermen have only three representatives on the Conservancy Board, whereas the anglers are represented by three elected members and also 10 *ex officio* members, together with 10 other *ex officio* members who may be called in at any moment; and whether he will inquire into the matter, with a view to remedying the alleged grievance of the Slaney fishermen?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspectors of Fisheries inform me that the Close Season Order referred to was passed with the object of preserving the stock of fish in the River Slaney, which was proved to be diminishing from excessive netting.

The Order was not passed in the interest of any one class of fishermen, and the Inspectors believe that the restrictions placed on netting will ultimately benefit both net fishermen and anglers. The facts appear to be as stated in the second paragraph; but I would point out that the constitution of the Board of Conservators is regulated by Statute, and that there is no power to interfere in the matter in this respect.

THE CASE OF EDWARD TAFTE.

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been directed to the case of Edward Taffe, now residing in great poverty in Boyle, County Roscommon, who was discharged from the Army in 1872 without a pension after three and a-half years' service in the East India Company, and 12 years and two months in the Imperial Service; is he aware that Edward Taffe was during almost the entire period on active service; that he joined the East India Company's Service (the Madras Fusiliers) in June, 1856; that he was transferred to the Imperial Service in January, 1860; that he was in active service all through the Indian Mutiny in No. 9 Battery 4th Brigade Artillery, as volunteer; that he afterwards went to New Zealand, and served in the Maori War; that he was sent to England in 1868, and was transferred to No. 9 Battery 2nd Brigade for foreign service; and that he was sent again to India (Singapore), where he remained until discharged; and will he give the matter his most favourable consideration, with the object of providing, if possible, that this man, after arduous and distinguished service in the Imperial forces, may have some provision beside the poor-house for his old age?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): E. Taffe's conduct in the Service was recorded as "very bad," and he was discharged in 1872 under sentence of Court Martial. It is not a case in which any pension can be granted.

SKIBBEREEN CUSTOM HOUSE.

MR. E. BARRY (Cork Co., S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to

a resolution recently passed by the Skibbereen Town Commissioners protesting against the removal of the Custom House from Skibbereen to Baltimore, a village nine miles distant from the former town, and whether he is aware that considerable inconvenience is likely to be caused to an extensive district of which Skibbereen is the centre should this contemplated removal of the Custom House be carried into effect; and what action he proposes to take in the matter?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): A copy of the resolution referred to was on Saturday last received by the Commissioners of Customs and will receive attention; but the changes of station of the Customs officers belonging to the Port of Skibbereen, from Bantry and Skibbereen to Baltimore, were considered to be advantageous both in the interests of the Service and of the public, and were recommended both by the late and the present district collector, who are of opinion that in view of the present railway communication between the two towns no inconvenience is likely to be caused to Skibbereen.

DUBLIN CUSTOM HOUSE.

MR. MC CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the great inconvenience caused by the closing of the entrance door leading from the public street to the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Custom House, Dublin; whether he is aware that, since the closing of this entry, the office can only be reached by a circuitous way up and down stairs and through long passages, involving considerable loss of time; and if he will, in the interest of the public, take into consideration the desirability of having this entrance door kept open during the office hours?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am informed that, though some slight inconvenience may have been caused by the step referred to, it can hardly be called serious, and it affects only a very limited number of persons. If the door were kept open during office hours it would necessitate the employment of an extra

porter for this purpose only, and the advantage to be gained would scarcely justify the expense.

REPORTS OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF MINES.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Summaries of the Statistical Portion of the Reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Mines will be in the hands of Members?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The Summaries are now in the printers' hands, and I understand they will be ready by Wednesday.

THE BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state whether the Government of the Dominion of Canada have agreed in full detail to the Behring Sea Award Bill; or whether any, and if so which, points still need consideration?

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Before the hon. Gentleman answers the question I should like to ask him if there is any difference between the Bill now before the House and the Bill of and Agreement with the United States Government, as has been alleged?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The expected Despatch from Canada, to which I referred on Thursday, has not yet arrived. We have no reason to suppose that it is likely to affect the principle of the Bill, and if Amendments may eventually be found to be necessary they can be introduced at a later stage.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can present to the House the text of the Behring Sea Award Bill which has now passed the Legislature of the United States?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): We received the original text of the United States British Sea Award Bill, and the various Amendments made in it have been communicated separately

by telegraph. As soon as the complete text of the Bill as passed is received it will be presented.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: May I ask my hon. Friend if he can give any explanation of the very serious report in *The Times* of to-day of the language used in the United States Senate concerning the Bill before this House, it being described as an evasion of the Arbitration Treaty?

*SIR E. GREY: I think it will be more convenient if the Attorney General is permitted to explain the matter when the Bill gets into Committee.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I should like to ask what arrangements the Government propose to make in order that this very important question may be discussed this evening. What security has the House that the Bill will be taken this evening?

*SIR E. GREY: I do not think that the question as to the disposal of the time of the House is one that I can reply to.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Then I beg to ask the Attorney General whether he will explain the statement which has appeared in the newspapers as to the existence of a serious difference between the United States Government and our own with regard to this Bill?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): There is no serious difference, and the statement to this effect is exaggerated. There is a variance between the two Bills, and I will take the opportunity of explaining the matter fully when the Bill gets into Committee this evening.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): What time shall we go into Committee? Do the Government propose to adjourn the Estimates in order to give us time to discuss this important question?

[No answer was given.]

NEW COUNTY MAGISTRATES.

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Return granted showing the County Magistrates appointed since the Resolution of this House of 5th May, 1893, will be presented?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North

Beds): All that I can learn from the Lord Chancellor is that the Return is being proceeded with, but is not yet ready.

MR. DODD: Then I beg to give notice that I will call the attention of the House to this matter on an early day.

BRITISH HERRINGS IN RUSSIA.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether certificates of origin will still be required in Russia for British herrings?

*SIR E. GREY: According to the new Regulations received by us, certificates of origin will only be required for herrings when preserved in marinade or oil, or when stuffed.

M. KERCKHOVEN'S EXPEDITION.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Expedition under M. Kerckhoven, which became established at Lado in the early part of 1893, has been completely withdrawn?

SIR E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government have no knowledge of the Expedition having been established at Lado.

COMMANDER BETHELL: Has there not been a correspondence on this very subject?

SIR E. GREY: I can give the hon. and gallant Member no information beyond that we have no knowledge of the Expedition having been established.

COMMANDER BETHELL: Then to what did the protest of Lord Rosebery refer?

SIR E. GREY: The Belgian Government was asked where the Expedition was, and they replied that they did not know what it was or where it could be.

DINIZULA.

COMMANDER BETHELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a decision in the case of the imprisonment of Dinizula and others has yet been made?

MR. S. BUXTON: The Secretary of State is in communication with Sir Marshall Clarke, Administrator of Zululand, in regard to this question, and other questions affecting Zululand. I cannot state when I shall be in a position to

make a communication to the House on the subject.

PONDOLAND.

COMMANDER BETHELL : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if, as reported, one of the lately contending Chiefs in Pondoland is to be exiled ; if so, where to ?

MR. S. BUXTON : We have as yet no official information confirming this report.

PARISH COUNCILS.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Instructions sent to the various Local Authorities with the view of bringing Parish Councils into existence during the present year ?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) : If the hon. Member will move for the Instructions they shall be laid on the Table of the House.

MR. HENEAGE : I will move.

H.M.S. "POWERFUL."

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the boilers of the *Powerful* now being built are to come from France ; and, if so, why they are not to be obtained from England ; and if the contract makes any provision that English materials shall be used as far as possible in the construction of the vessel, or that the Resolution of the House in 1891 as to fair wages and fair hours shall be observed ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : The boilers of the *Powerful* will be built by an English firm. Materials of British manufacture will be used as far as possible in constructing the ship. The contract provides for giving effect to the Resolution of the House.

ARMOUR-PIERCING PROJECTILES.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what information he can give to the House as to the results of trials of armour-piercing shot manufactured by a Sheffield firm, 9·2 inches in diameter, and weighing

380 pounds each, which are stated to have passed entirely through a 14-inch compound plate, and then through four feet of oak backing into a heap of sand in the rear, without any practical damage to the shot itself ; whether the French projectiles have given similarly good results ; and whether they were for Army or Navy use ?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley) (who replied) said : The trial referred to is the ordinary test for armour-piercing projectiles of the calibre named. Only one shot was fired, and as it passed proof the projectiles were accepted for land service. No French projectiles of 9·2 inches have been tested by us during the last three years. No comparison, therefore, can be made with French shot of recent date.

LESSON BOOKS IN IRISH SCHOOLS.

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can now state when the Return in regard to the lesson books of the Irish National School Board, which was ordered some months ago, will be laid upon the Table of the House ?

MR. J. MORLEY : The Board of National Education report that with every pressure on the staff to close the Return at an early date it will not be possible, in view of the other heavy engagements of the Office, to complete it for presentation until the end of the current month.

TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH BURGH HEATH.

MR. BUCKNILL (Surrey, Epsom) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether arrangements were made and concluded by the Post Office, so far back as a year since, for laying down telegraphic communication with Burgh Heath, in the County of Surrey, for the transaction of public telegraph business there ; whether any reason exists for the delay in carrying out the said arrangements ; and whether eligible residents at Burgh Heath have offered to take the post and telegraph office there, and to work the same ?

MR. A. MORLEY : It is the case that nearly a year ago the Post Office undertook to extend telegraphic com-

munication to Burgh Heath. Great difficulty was, however, experienced in obtaining the necessary permission to erect the telegraphs, both from private persons and from the Surrey County Council. When these difficulties were at last overcome the Sub-Postmaster declined to conduct telegraph business, and it appeared that there was no other eligible person who could be appointed to the office. I am now informed of two applicants for the post, and I have given instructions for the necessary inquiry to be made with a view to ascertain whether one of them can be recommended. If so, I will see that there is no further delay in carrying out the telegraph extension.

THE ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENTAL RIFLE.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, stationed in Ceylon, is supplied with the Lee-Metford Magazine Rifle ; if so, whether the following changes, stated by the War Office on 6th June, 1893, to be important modifications of the Mark 1 Rifle, have been made in the said rifle—namely, bolt, rounded at end to suit the rounded angle of cocking piece ; spring (magazine), a fourth coil added ; screws (bolt cover) (two), made a tight fit ; screws (bolt head), mild cast steel, hardened at point and tempered, instead of mild steel unhardened ; and whether the regiment is supplied with the Lee-Metford Magazine Rifle, Mark 2, with the Penn-Deeley patent bolt head ?

*MR. WOODALL : The battalion of the Warwickshire Regiment in Ceylon has the Mark 1 (star) Lee-Metford Rifle. It is not known for certain whether the first of the modifications named in the question was made in these particular arms, as it was only applied to rifles made after a certain date. It is not, however, a point of much importance.

MR. WEIR : Is the hon. Gentleman aware that on the 6th of June last the War Office stated that these modifications were of really great importance ?

*MR. WOODALL : It is quite true that the series of modifications introduced into the Mark 1 (star) Rifle finally adopted are useful and important, but the one in question is a small detail.

Mr. A. Morley

MANUFACTURING COSTS AT ENFIELD AND SPARKBROOK.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state what it costs to manufacture a Lee-Metford magazine rifle at Enfield, and what it costs at Sparkbrook, assuming that the same number and kind of Lee-Metford Magazine Rifle is ordered from each factory ?

*MR. WOODALL : The productive power at Enfield is about three times as great as was that at Sparkbrook, and it is therefore not possible to give from practical experience the cost of producing an equal number of arms at each factory. Under ordinary circumstances the difference of cost is but fractional. For instance, the cost for the last three years of completed accounts was as follows :—1890-1, Enfield, £3 11s. 10½d.; Birmingham, £3 14s. 5d. ; 1891-2, Enfield, £3 11s. ; Birmingham, £3 9s. 2d. ; 1892-3, Enfield, £3 14s. 6½d.; Birmingham, £3 17s. 4¼d.; and these fluctuations were due principally to the value of orders placed at each factory.

MR. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley) : May I ask whether establishment costs are added ?

MR. WOODALL : Yes.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) : Is there not information at the War Office to the effect that the rifles made at Sparkbrook cost 2s. 6d. less than those made at Enfield in 1891, and if this is the case, would there not have been a saving of £11,000 of public money had all the rifles been made at Sparkbrook during that year ?

MR. WOODALL : I admit that in 1891-2 the rifles made at Sparkbrook cost 1s. 10d. per arm less than those produced at Enfield ; but, on the other hand, in the preceding and succeeding years the cost at Birmingham was higher than at Enfield.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS : And was not that increased cost due to the fact that the charges for plant, machinery, &c., were included in the reckoning against the rifles ?

*MR. WOODALL : My right hon. Friend can easily satisfy himself on that account. The cost of producing the rifles includes actual expenditure, wages, material, depreciation on buildings and

plant, establishment charges, and amortisement of machinery erected for the special purpose of manufacturing the rifle.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND MINISTERIAL CRISIS.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can now state the decision arrived at by Her Majesty's Government in reference to the request for a dissolution made to the Governor of Newfoundland by the present Ministers of that Colony?

MR. S. BUXTON : The Governor of Newfoundland is still in communication with his Ministers on the subject of the political crisis that has arisen.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) : Does the hon. Gentleman mean to say the Governor is directed to take the advice of the responsible Ministers in this matter, seeing that they are the gentlemen whose conduct is now under trial?

MR. S. BUXTON : But as in all self-Governing Bodies the responsible advisers of the Governor are the Ministers until they retire he is bound to take their advice, although he may not follow it.

UGANDA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have now come to a decision in regard to the affairs of Uganda; whether he can state what that decision is; and whether he can intimate any likely date when time can be allotted for the consideration of the question in this House?

***SIR E. GREY** : Papers relating to Uganda cannot be distributed till tomorrow. The statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not be made until Thursday.

MR. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) : Will the Papers be accompanied by a map?

SIR E. GREY : The Government will have no objection to furnish one, if such a map is not already included in the Papers.

BANSTEAD COMMON.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) : I beg to ask the Attorney General if his attention has been directed to a proposal made to the Corporation of London, on the 15th of February, and with which his name has been connected, to inclose and divide one-half of Banstead Commons amongst private individuals; whether his name has been used with his authority; and whether the proposal is in contravention of the Metropolitan Commons (Banstead) Supplemental Act, passed last Session, by which the whole of the said Commons were secured for the benefit and enjoyment of the public?

***SIR C. RUSSELL** : My attention has been called to the proposal in question. My position in relation to it can best be explained by reading the material part of the letter which, upon seeing my name mentioned in connection with the scheme, I wrote to Mr. Robert Vigers, surveyor, who proposed the scheme, and his answer to my letter. On February 20, 1894, I wrote to him—

"Dear Sir,—I am surprised to find my name put forward as if supporting the Banstead enclosure scheme. I cannot think you meant to do this wholly unwarrantable thing. When I saw you here I told you—(1) That I was opposed to the scheme, and, if carried, would give you a commission to sell my place; (2) that the conservators (of whom I am one) could be no parties to propounding such a scheme; and (3) that I felt certain that no such scheme could be carried through Parliament."

Mr. Vigers' reply was as follows—

"Dear Sir Charles,—I have your letter of this day's date, from which I note that you express surprise at seeing an article in the newspapers making mis-statements, and that you, above all people, assume them to be correct. My experience of newspaper reports is that should one happen to know all the facts it is sure to be untrue. I practically agree with all your statements, number 1, 2, and 3, with the exception that you told me that if I got the scheme carried you would give me a commission if I could sell your place. I do say that you told me that you had some talk with Mr. Budden, and that you had offered him a commission if he could sell your place for you. I have to-day been before the Committee of the Corporation upon this matter, and I made it my business to say that the statements made in the newspapers about you and some of the other gentlemen who surround the common were incorrect; in fact, your letter came to me while I was waiting to attend the City Committee. I hope, therefore, you will be satisfied that I have not done anything unwarrantable, and if anybody has been guilty of mis-statement it has been the public Press. Yours faithfully, Robert Vigers."

I may add that Mr. Francis Baring, Mr. Bonsor, the Member for Wimbledon, and myself were amongst those who bore the cost of the heavy litigation in Chancery, which rescued Banstead Downs from enclosure, and I have reason to know that Mr. Baring and Mr. Bonsor are both opposed to the enclosure scheme in question.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON
SECONDARY EDUCATION.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the terms of the Reference to the Royal Commission on Secondary Education would enable them to have regard to the conditions upon which the existing sources of revenue from endowment have been hitherto attached to particular forms of teaching, whether religious or otherwise?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) (who replied) said: It lies with the Commission to interpret the Reference which has been made to it, and I am unable to give any information on this point. I cannot doubt that they would consider any communication the hon. Gentleman may think right to make to them.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): May I ask whether the terms of the Reference to the Commission were not agreed upon on the advice of Her Majesty's Government, and why the Government cannot therefore state their intentions?

MR. ACLAND: When a Reference has been made to a Royal Commission it lies with the Royal Commission to deal with the matter.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: It is obvious that the Government must have meant something, and the question I venture to put is this: The Government gave certain advice to Her Majesty, under which the Royal Commission is issued. Did they intend that the Commissioners should have power to inquire not only as to the amount of endowments, but as to the circumstances surrounding them? There is a vast number of these secondary education endowments wholly devoted to the purposes of religious education, and the Reference is a matter of extreme importance to them. Unless the terms of the Reference are made clear, all

the investigations of the Commission will probably be useless.

MR. ACLAND: The Reference is perfectly clear, and has been made in perfect good faith. The Royal Commission is the body to interpret the Reference.

THE BUDGET.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will provide in the forthcoming Budget for the return of duty which has been paid on spirit on importation when such spirit is exported as methylated spirit, it being stated that the refusal to allow the return of such duty is driving the trade from this country?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The time has not yet arrived to announce the Budget proposals.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST CHOLERA.

MR. HENEAGE: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government have considered the very serious expenditure which is incurred by the Local Authorities of seaport towns and fishing villages in taking special precautions, by order of the Local Government Board, to prevent the introduction of cholera; and whether they will be prepared to assist such Local Authorities to defray the cost of such special precautions as are taken in the interest of the whole country in regard to the inspection of vessels at sea, provision for isolation of patients in hospital ships, and the disinfection of vessels at sea?

SIR W. HARCOURT: This question was discussed many times in the course of last year, and I have nothing to add to what I then said.

MR. HENEAGE: Were not the three specific subjects mentioned in my question agreed on by the late President of the Local Government Board and the 80 Members who waited on him last year?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think not. I have already stated that the ports had not established any special claim as apart from the other parts of the Kingdom; and I have no reason to depart from that opinion.

OUTDOOR RELIEF IN THE LISTOWEL UNION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the auditor of the Local Government Board has recently made any Report in reference to the abuse of outdoor relief in the Listowel Union; whether a special meeting of the Board of Guardians was recently convened to consider the Auditor's Report; and if he can state the nature of the Report, and the action taken by the Guardians thereon?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Auditor's Report on the accounts of the Listowel Union was submitted to the Board of Guardians by their clerk in the usual way, and it is open to the hon. Gentleman to obtain from the local newspapers the substance of the auditor's remarks. With regard to the action of the Guardians on the Report, I am informed that at a special meeting held on the 15th of February the Guardians called upon the several relieving officers to furnish lists of the recipients of outdoor relief, with a view to a general revision of the lists, and that the matter is still engaging the attention of the Guardians.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): As this question contains a reflection on a Board of Guardians in my constituency, can I see the Report of the auditor?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will inquire, but I am told the substance of the Report was published in the local newspapers.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Is it not a fact that the cost of outdoor relief in the Listowel Union amounted to 1s. 10d. in the £1?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot say.

PUBLICANS AS MAGISTRATES.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the date upon which the Commission of the Peace was conferred upon Mr. E. P. O'Kelly, of Baltinglass, County Wicklow; whether he is aware that Mr. O'Kelly was the holder of a retail licence for the sale of intoxicating liquors in that town, and that he transferred the licence before his appointment to the Bench to his wife; whether it has been brought to his knowledge that the Queen's

Bench in Ireland has decided that the transfer of a licence can only be granted in one of three events—the death of the licensed person, sale of the premises, or the assignment of the licence on removal from the premises; and whether, in view of this decision, he will take steps to prevent the colourable transfer of licences in order to qualify for the Commission of the Peace?

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): Is it necessary for the holder of a licence to get rid of that licence, by transfer or otherwise, in order to qualify as a Magistrate?

MR. J. MORLEY: The gentleman referred to was appointed to the Commission of the Peace on the 15th March. Upon ascertaining that he held a publican's licence, the Lord Chancellor required that a *bonâ fide* transfer of the licence should be made, and this Mr. O'Kelly informed the Lord Chancellor had been done. He has since ascertained, however, that the transfer was a colourable one. The law appears to be as stated in the third paragraph, and acting on that view of the law the Lord Chancellor will insist on a *bonâ fide* transfer, and will not permit a colourable transfer in this or any other case.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Queen's Bench having decided that these colourable transfers are illegal, will the Lord Chancellor see that the publicans who have made them are not allowed to defeat the Licensing Laws by sitting on the Bench when licensing matters are dealt with?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have said that these colourable transfers will not be allowed.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question, whether it is necessary to get rid of the licence, by transfer or otherwise, in order to qualify as a Magistrate?

MR. J. MORLEY: That involves a legal question, which rests with the Lord Chancellor.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: But is it the case that the holder of a licence is not qualified for the Commission of the Peace?

MR. J. MORLEY: No, that is not the case. Holders of licences have been appointed to the Bench by the late Government and other Governments.

CHARITIES OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN,
OXFORD.

MR. DODD: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the Charity Commission has propounded a scheme for the parish charities of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, in which the trustees are to be three of them *ex officio*, three of them co-optive, and five (being a minority) representative; whether he is aware that 200 years ago these charities were under the control of the Vestry, which was then elected by each of the ratepayers having one vote and no more; if so, whether he will suggest to the Commission to withdraw the co-optive element from the scheme; and, as to Nixon's Charity at Oxford (an educational one), whether he will suggest to the Commission that, in framing the new scheme now before them, they should give power to the trustees to let their land, if they see fit, or parts of it, in allotments?

MR. ACLAND: The Commissioners, in the result of representations made to them, have already modified the Draft Scheme for these charities by the omission of the Churchwardens from the proposed Governing Body, thus leaving the trustees to be elected by the ratepayers in a majority. In the case of one only of the charities, but that the largest, the income was, in the reign of James I., directed to be applied by the Churchwardens, with the consent of the major part of the householders parishioners of the parish. The other charities have been administered by the Vicar and parish officers or some of them, or by individual trustees. In these circumstances, the Commissioners do not contemplate any further alteration of the Governing Body. The scheme for Nixon's Charity at Oxford is no longer before the Commissioners, having been submitted to the Education Department on the 19th of March last.

POSTMEN AND THE QUEEN'S
BIRTHDAY.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the practice of granting a holiday to those engaged in the Customs service, and also the major departments of the Post Office, on the Queen's birthday, can be ex-

tended to postmen generally throughout the United Kingdom?

MR. A. MORLEY: I fear not. The public would not tolerate the post being stopped throughout the country on the day set apart for celebrating Her Majesty's Birthday.

THE SUNDAY DISTURBANCES AT CORK.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many persons have been arrested by the Constabulary in connection with the continued assaults which have been made upon Protestant preachers in the streets of Cork; and whether any of the persons so arrested have been brought to trial; if so, with what result?

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): At the same time I will ask the right hon. Gentleman, with reference to the riotous scenes which on each Sunday for some months past have taken place in the City of Cork by reason of attacks made on Protestant clergymen, whether the action of the said clergymen in preaching in the streets is legal; and, if not, whether they have been proceeded against for continuing such preaching to test the legality of their action; whether any persons have been proceeded against for assaulting and interfering with said Protestant preachers; and whether he will give instructions to the police either to prohibit the preaching or to prevent the assaults upon the said preachers?

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): Is it a fact that these preachers have themselves assaulted the police; if so, have any of them been arrested, or had proceedings taken against them, and with what result?

*MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): Has the right hon. Gentleman observed that the Rev. Mr. Hallowes, of Arklow notoriety, has gone to Cork to join those street preachers, whom I, in common with gentlemen opposite, regard as a menace to the public peace and an insult to Catholics in the vicinity? And would the right hon. Gentleman think well of drawing the attention of those gentlemen to the admirable letter written on the 3rd of February, 1891, by the present Leader of the Opposition to this same Mr. Hallowes, in which he points out that the division between dif-

ferent sections of the community caused by difference of creed is so deep and so far-reaching, and religious convictions are so closely interwoven with political opinions, that a course which would be innocent and even praiseworthy on one side of St. George's Channel might be morally and if not legally indefensible on the other, and that this fact, while it affords no shadow of an excuse for violence, may very possibly offer sufficient grounds for criticising the action of those by whom the violence is knowingly provoked?

MR. J. MORLEY: In answer to these questions, I have to state that no person has been arrested or brought to trial by the police for proceedings arising out of the religious services in the streets of Cork. The police have not witnessed any assaults upon the preachers, and, as I am informed, no actual assaults of a serious nature have been committed on them. The assaults that have been committed were of the nature of horseplay, consisting of hustling and mud-throwing, and were invariably committed by women and boys; but the police have seen no stones thrown, as has been alleged, nor do they believe that a single stone has been thrown on any occasion. In confirmation of the reports which have been made to me by the police, I am informed by their very experienced officer in charge that not one of the preachers has received the slightest hurt or injury since the commencement of these proceedings in November last; and it is due to the police to say that the unwearied and efficient protection afforded by them to the preachers at all times has prevented the commission of serious assaults, or the occurrence of anything more painful and deplorable than has already taken place. I have previously remarked that the accounts of these transactions which have appeared in the Press have been grossly exaggerated, and as regards the complaints that have been made regarding the action of the police throughout these very trying proceedings, many eye-witnesses of the occurrences—both Protestant and Catholic—have, unsolicited, offered to testify to the good temper and forbearance displayed by the police. With reference to the question raised by the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University as to the legality of the preaching, I would observe that street preaching *per se* is no offence by Common

or Statute Law, but that in the performance of an otherwise legal act the preachers act illegally if they thereby obstruct or by gathering crowds cause an obstruction of the highway. This was the principle recognised by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in his dealings with the more violent proceedings at Arklow. It is competent to the Constabulary to compel any person obstructing the highway or causing an obstruction to move on, and, in addition, it is the duty of the police, if they cannot otherwise prevent a breach of the peace, to disperse such an assemblage as provokes it. The preachers must be aware that they are acting illegally by causing obstruction, but, as the offence is one which can be prosecuted by any member of the public, it is also well known that the police, as public prosecutors, claim the exercise of a discretion in the institution of proceedings. At Arklow private individuals prosecuted with unsatisfactory results, notwithstanding the fact that a conviction for obstruction was obtained and one of the preachers, in default of paying the fine, went to prison. There was no encouragement for a police prosecution at Arklow, and, having regard to the experiences there, there is no encouragement to proceed at Cork.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): As to the charge of obstruction, is it not a fact that the Mayor and Corporation of Cork had suggested that the street preachers should carry on in future their proceedings only on the Marina or other open space?

MR. J. MORLEY: I believe that is their recommendation.

MR. SEXTON: Is there not some Society or Organisations which, by providing funds, is responsible for the obstinate persistence of these street preachers? Will the right hon. Gentleman direct inquiries into that point?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not aware of that, but I will cause inquiry to be made.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Government propose to mete out a different treatment to the preachers in Ireland to that which was meted out a short time ago to the Salvation Army preachers in connection with meetings they attempted to conduct at East-

bourne and elsewhere? Did not the Government in those cases interfere, and even repeal a clause in Private Bills which was contrary to the public law? I am not defending these Cork preachers, but I cannot see any difference between the two classes of preachers or meetings, and I think that the law that applies to gatherings of that sort at Eastbourne should also apply to the proceedings at Cork.

*MR. SPEAKER: This question is only an argumentative way of bringing forward a matter having reference to another question than the one under consideration, and I must rule it out of Order.

TEMPERANCE CANTEENS FOR THE ARMY.

MR. ARCHIBALD GROVE (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he could state what facilities are offered to the Army Temperance Associations for establishing canteens in the various Military Centres; and whether it would be possible to establish a temperance canteen with every regiment, or at every Military Centre?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): There is already in every barrack what is practically a temperance canteen—namely, the room where non-intoxicants are sold—under Article 84 of Section 15 of the Queen's Regulations. We have also included in the Estimates for this year a sum of £500 as a grant-in-aid of the Army Temperance Association, and our desire is to assist that Association to the full extent of our power in extending its operations in this country.

HIGHBURY VALE SCHOOL.

SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that certain expenditure upon a new cloak-room at Highbury Vale School has been disregarded by the Department as not legitimate under Article 90 of the Code; whether, in addition to this fine upon the resources of the school, very long delay has taken place in the payment of grant; and whether he will state the reason for this long delay, and the decision in regard to the cloak-room?

Mr. T. W. Russell

MR. ACLAND: The grant to this school, which was inspected on the 29th of January, has now been paid. The delay in the case was mainly due to the managers having included in their accounts a sum not specified representing the cost of building a new cloak-room, and having afterwards placed the case in the hands of the Diocesan Board of Education instead of withdrawing the sum from the accounts. The right hon. Gentleman must, I think, be well aware that the cost of structural additions to a school is, and always has been, disallowed under the Code as expenditure in the accounts of the school. There has been no fine on the resources of the school, the full grant having been paid.

GAS CONSUMPTION IN PARLIAMENT HOUSES.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can state what quantity of gas was consumed in the Houses of Parliament in the year 1893; what was the total cost of the same; and what was the price charged per 1,000 cubic feet by the Company supplying the gas?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The total consumption of gas in 1893 in the Houses of Parliament and their precincts was 27,871,000 cubic feet; the total cost was £4,223, besides £33 for meter rents; and the price was 3s. 1d. per 1,000 feet, except for the street lamps, for which the charge is 2s. 2d. per 1,000.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: I understand that the Vestries of London are paying for the gas used by them for all purposes at a uniform cost of 2s. 2d. per thousand, and I should be glad to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will approach the Gas Company with a view of getting them to supply all the gas required at the lower rate?

MR. H. GLADSTONE: There are two qualities of gas, I believe, supplied by the Company; but I will inquire into the matter.

TRINIDAD AND VENEZUELA.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what steps are being taken to relieve the Colony of Trinidad

from the extra impost of 30 per cent. levied for 12 years past in Venezuela upon all goods coming from that island and the Antilles over and above the heavy duties levied upon goods from any other part of the world; and, having regard to the injury this extra duty has inflicted upon the Colony most adjacent to Venezuela, if Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency of conferring with the other Antilean Powers—namely, France, Holland, and Spain, upon the situation, should the removal of the extra impost not be favourably considered by the new President, General Crespo, and Senor Bojas, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Caracas?

MR. S. BUXTON: Diplomatic relations with Venezuela are still suspended, and consequently no steps have been taken at Caracas to relieve the Colony of Trinidad from the impost referred to in the first paragraph of this question. Owing to this continued suspension of relations, Her Majesty's Government do not consider the present moment propitious for entering into any negotiations on the subject.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Will the Government take the earliest opportunity of moving in the matter?

MR. S. BUXTON: That question should be addressed to the Foreign Office.

CATTLE SEIZURES IN COUNTY TYRONE.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that on the 3rd of November, near Six Mile Cross, in the County of Tyrone, cattle, the property of William Sawyers, which were being driven by George Sawyers, a son of William Sawyers, and a man named Joseph M'Farland, were seized by two bailiffs carrying out a decree against Joseph M'Farland at the suit of the Ulster Bank; and that M'Farland and George Sawyers, for resisting this seizure, were arrested and returned for trial to the Quarter Sessions at Omagh, County Tyrone; that, before allowing the cattle to be released, the bailiffs insisted on the instructions of the solicitor for the Ulster Bank on payment of the amount of the decree, which George Sawyers, who had got out on bail, paid under protest; that

the money so paid by George Sawyers was recovered on a decree obtained against the Ulster Bank at the Belfast Quarter Sessions last January; that George Sawyers was subsequently put on his trial at the Omagh Quarter Sessions, and convicted for the alleged rescue; whether he is aware that the Sessional Crown Solicitor for County Tyrone (Mr. T. C. Dickie), who prosecuted George Sawyers at the Omagh Quarter Sessions, is also the Solicitor for the Ulster Bank who obtained the decree for the said bank against M'Farland; whether Crown Solicitors are entitled to utilise their office as Crown Solicitors in the interest of their private clients; what justification was there for the issue of this warrant without notice, and under such unusual circumstances; and whether directions will be given that these proceedings will be immediately discontinued?

MR. J. MORLEY: The first paragraph sets forth the facts with substantial accuracy except, as I am informed, that the ownership of the cattle was not tried by the Judge at Quarter Sessions. The two men, M'Farland and Sawyers, were arrested on a warrant obtained by the bailiff, and were tried at the Omagh January Quarter Sessions, when they pleaded guilty and were allowed out on their own recognisances to attend for judgment when called upon. They appear to have been dealt with in this manner in consequence of Sawyer's undertaking not to execute the decree obtained by him against the Bank. Contrary to the arrangement thus entered into, Sawyers levied the decree, and the Sessional Crown Solicitor, who appears to have regarded this as a breach of faith, served him with the usual 10 days' notice to come up for judgment at next Quarter Sessions. No warrant has been issued in connection with this branch of the case. The attention of the Attorney General having been drawn to the facts of the case some days ago, directed that the notice to appear for judgment should be at once withdrawn by the Sessional Crown Solicitor.

BUILDING SOCIETIES' ACTS.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the intention of the Government to

introduce, during the present Session, a Bill to amend the Law relating to Building Societies?

MR. ASQUITH: It is the intention of my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works to introduce a measure to amend the law relating to Building Societies.

THE BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

MR. W. KENNY: I have to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whom I have given private notice of the question, whether, having regard to the order in which the Government Bills were placed—first, Registration; second, Welsh Disestablishment; third, Evicted Tenants; and fourth, Local Veto—the House may take it for granted that the Government have determined to put the Welsh Disestablishment Bill before the Evicted Tenants Bill?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I received notice of this question about two and a-half minutes ago. The hon. Member can draw no conclusions of the kind which he seems to have been disposed to draw until the Government have declared their intentions.

THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: May I ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, to whom I have given private notice of the question, whether, in view of all the circumstances of the case, and especially in view of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition said on Thursday that all Parties were agreed as to the first part of the terms of Reference, he does not think it advisable to go on with the first part of the Reference at once? Will he not consent to move that part to-night?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am considering how it may be possible to establish a *modus vivendi* with gentlemen opposite, and am engaged in negotiations on the matter. If the hon. Member will ask me a question on Thursday, I will give him a definite answer.

THE BEHRING SEA ARBITRATION BILL.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): With reference to what fell from the Attorney General earlier in the afternoon, I should like to ask at what time the Government propose to adjourn other business in order to take the

Mr. Gerald Balfour

Behring Sea Arbitration Bill, which does not stand even as second Order on the Paper?

SIR W. HARCOURT: We are anxious that proper time should be given for the consideration of a Bill of such importance. But I hope we may assume that, under the circumstances, it is not a Bill which is going to be opposed. It would be a very ungracious thing towards the United States if it were opposed. I am extremely anxious, on account of the International character of the Bill, that it should not be made the subject of Party controversy. Would it be considered adequate if we took the Bill at half-past 11?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As a matter of personal explanation, let me remind the right hon. Gentleman that when the Bill was read a second time I took great pains to make it clear that the Bill would not be treated by us in any controversial spirit, and that I would do my best to enable it to pass. The whole difficulty arises from some differences between this measure and the measure presented to the United States Legislature. I am not qualified to say whether the differences are such as would justify a Debate in this House. The Government are better judges of that; but I hope they will not stint the necessary time for the consideration of the Bill.

SIR W. HARCOURT: If it is desired, the Bill will be taken at 11 o'clock.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

James Caldwell, esquire, for the County of Lanark (Mid Division.)

MOTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (GOVERNMENT BUSINESS).

RESOLUTION.

SIR W. HARCOURT, in rising to move—

"That for the remainder of the Session Government Business do have priority on Tuesday. That on Friday the House do meet at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to Tuesday and the Morning Sitting on Friday,"

said: I shall, no doubt, be expected by the House to state the grounds on which Her Majesty's Government make this claim—this large claim—in respect of the

time to be given to them for the transaction of business. I will do so with absolute frankness and in a manner that will give offence, I hope, to no Party or section in the House. The grounds on which the Government make this request are—first of all, the date indicated by the calendar; secondly, the business the House has to transact; and, thirdly, the relation of the Government to that business. As regards the date, I may remind the House that it is the 9th of April, and I think I need not remind the House of the abnormal circumstances that have taken place in the first quarter of this year. I will not refer to those circumstances in detail, for they are all familiar to the House. I will take this opportunity of cordially recognising the assistance the Government have received from the Opposition in transacting the necessary business in order to conclude the first quarter of the year. It is well-known that the Government were placed in an exceptional position. They were bound to conclude the financial business of the country by a particular date, and I am glad to recognise the assistance they received from gentlemen in all quarters of the House in performing that part of their duty. But what we are concerned with to-day is the future, and what remains of the Session on which we have entered. In these circumstances, I do not propose to do what has been done on some occasions and go through a number of precedents, because precedents really have no bearing upon the circumstances of the present time. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes; that is a well-founded observation, as I shall endeavour to show to the House. I will take it for granted that I shall have the assent of the House to this proposition, that if we can help it we are not to follow the example of last year. The continued and continuous sittings of Parliament are, I think, neither good for the House of Commons nor good for the country; and, if I may assume that, I hope it may be an element that we shall take into consideration in determining what we are going to do with the future of the Session. I would point out to the House that, according to the present arrangements, the business days at the disposal of the Government are eight in the month, and that is making no allowance for vacations

at Easter and at Whitsuntide. You may multiply that by the number of months you desire the House of Commons to sit. I will not make that multiplication, but I observe that my right hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) has fixed the time when the Session is to be closed. It is a little old-fashioned, I think, but he and I remember when the Session closed on August 10; and that is the date that he now adopts. I shall not be so rash myself as to fix any date; but if I take the date he has adopted, the number of days at the disposal of the Government without any recess at Whitsuntide is somewhere about 36.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, 32.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, 32. Therefore, according to the hypothesis of my right hon. Friend, 32 days are available to the Government to transact the business they have to deal with. I venture to say that those eight days in the month are not sufficient for the business that the Government have to transact in the House of Commons. I would venture candidly to desire the House to consider what is the business which the Government is expected to transact—and rightly expected to transact—in the course of a Session, and I will discuss this not in relation to one Government or another, but in relation to all Governments, as the question affects our successors as much as it does ourselves. The first and indispensable business is the administrative business of the Government connected with Supply and all that depends on it—all questions relating to the administrative business of the country at home, in the colonies, in India, in foreign affairs, and all the questions that lie outside the circle of legislative action. That is the first class of business the Government have to transact, and that nobody else can transact. The second class of business is what I should designate as legislation of a neutral character—that is to say, legislation not of a distinctly Party or political character, or of a highly controversial character, but of a sort and magnitude which only the Government can deal with. There are frequently proposals made by non-official Members of which it is said that the subject can only be adequately dealt with by the Government, and we are familiar

with many measures of that kind. There must always be a certain number of Bills of that character which the Government must always deal with. Then there remain other Bills which I may call the controversial and political Bills of the Government. People sometimes ask "Why have Party and political measures at all?" Party government in this country is of the essence of your Parliamentary institutions and of the action of the House of Commons. I have always believed that the House of Commons could not exist except through Party government, and I have never joined those who see in it anything to condemn. It is a condition of your Party government that each Party in turn must have certain measures naturally not representing the sentiments and convictions of the Party opposite to them, but of the majority for the time being, and it is absolutely essential that the Government should bring forward great controversial measures which they strongly support and which those opposed to them equally strongly resist. I think that that is a fair description of the different classes of business which the Government have to conduct—are properly expected to conduct. If that is so, let us consider whether we can do that in the allowance of 32 days of my right hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby. I will venture to say that if we were to-day at the commencement of an ordinary Session, under the most average circumstances, the allowance of eight days a month to the Government would be absolutely insufficient to enable them to transact the business that is expected, and which the Government ought to perform. I venture to say that that is a subject in which hon. Gentlemen opposite are quite as much concerned as we are, and that that is a matter which they would do well to consider.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: What is the allowance that the right hon. Gentleman makes for the Budget?

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is a question which I can hardly answer. Perhaps I ought to have stated more specifically that that is a part of the administrative business of the country. I am obliged to the noble Lord for reminding me that this year, as everybody knows, the financial condition of the country is such that the financial pro-

posals of the Government must take considerable time.

An hon. MEMBER: Speak up.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That only adds to the strength of the consideration that I am endeavouring to bring before the House. Let us see what is the distribution of the time of the House. Out of five sitting days three are allowed to non-official Members and to the Government. I would ask the House whether that is a reasonable distribution of the time of the House? In my opinion it is not, if you are to have any limit to your Session, and you mean to impose upon the Government the business which it is expected to fulfil. It is said that in this House the Front Benches are regarded as the natural enemies of the non-official Members, and I suppose that it may also be said that the latter are the natural enemies of the two Front Benches. I venture to protest against that description. It seems to me that the two Front Benches, with all the defects that they unquestionably possess, are not a caste by themselves. They are, after all, the creation of the non-official Members. They are the recognised organs and instruments of their several Parties on both sides of the House, and give effect to their opinions and wishes and pledges. There may be good reason to get rid of them in their individual capacity, but you must have something of the kind; for without it, it is impossible that business can be transacted. After all, the Front Benches and the non-official Members on both sides are engaged in a common cause which it is to their interest to promote, and it is a question of policy and of expediency how the time of the House should be distributed. It is not denied that the Government have the whole administrative business to conduct and also the greater part of the legislative business of the House, whether controversial or non-controversial. I do not wish to be thought to disparage the services towards legislation and the great principles of Foreign and Colonial policy and other policies that have been rendered, and are capable of being rendered, by the non-official Members of the House. They have been of use in the past, and will be so in the future, but it will not be denied that at the present moment, for carrying to a practical

conclusion any measure of importance, the Government is the only capable instrument. Now, if I am allowed to apply these observations to the present, I say that, in respect of administrative business and non-contentious and non-controversial business, the Government have a right to appeal to all sections of the House to give them ample time for dealing with that description of business. As regards the larger Bills of a more controversial character, and as regards the political Bills, I perfectly admit that we have no claim upon gentlemen opposite who are opposed to these measures and who desire to resist them. I cannot ask them—if I did I know I should not get it—that they will give us any facilities to promote any measures which they desire to see not passed into law. But, Sir, the time of the House is at the disposal of the majority of the House. Whether it be, as was the case in the last Parliament, a Tory majority, or whether, as in this Parliament, it be a Liberal majority, the time of the House is at the disposal of the majority. When it has been desired to give effect to political measures like the Crimes Act or the Home Rule Bill, the House has had no hesitation in affording the time necessary. I am stating what I believe to be unquestionably the truth—that the question of determining the disposal of the time of the House is a matter upon which the majority of the House has a right to decide. As I have said before, we have no right to expect the minority to facilitate measures to which they are opposed; but, for the same reason, the Government have the right to appeal to the majority of the House—by whom, in fact, they are placed in the position they hold—to give them the means and to afford them the support that is necessary to give effect to the Bills which they desire to see carried into law. We are the crew of a vessel which has a fixed destination; we have a voyage to make; we have a precious cargo to carry. [*Ironical cheers.*] I know that is a cargo which you do not desire to see carried. We, however, regard it as a valuable cargo. It has been placed in our charge, and we are responsible for it. In making that voyage, and in meeting the stormy seas and the winds and waves which we have to encounter from the Opposition, we desire to press straight on. We cannot afford to make calls at

all the interesting spots on the way. That is not our business—it would be the business of a voyage of pleasure, which ours is not. [A VOICE: “Speak up.”] I must appeal for the usual courtesies of Debate. We are pledged to go forward in the way to which we have pledged ourselves, and we ask the support of those who concur in our opinions and who desire the success of the measures to which we are committed. Those are the grounds—which I have endeavoured to state as impartially and calmly as I can—why I make upon the majority of the House a claim and a request which the Government believe to be founded upon reason. We have asked no more than we consider that we absolutely require. I know we are to be met with various Amendments. One Amendment upon the Paper is that our present request should be limited till Whitsuntide. That would be a waste of time, because we should then have to fight the battle over again. We, therefore, cannot accept that. Another Amendment is that we should take only Tuesday mornings, and not the whole of Tuesdays. We do not think that would be adequate for the purpose. My right hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby is more liberal, for he is going to propose that we should limit our request to August 10. I am obliged to him, but that would be rather like fixing a particular date beforehand as the limit for the duration of the Session. Besides these proposals, what is still more formidable is, that we shall most probably be pressed to make exceptions in the case of particular Bills. If so, I may say at once that in the request now made there is no time for exceptions. If we once commence to deal with exceptions, we shall have a prolonged contest in which it will be very difficult to know to whom the apple is to be given. The Government have already committed themselves to give days for four special subjects. There is the Navy, the discussion upon which is to be taken, I hope, to-day, and, if necessary, to-morrow. There is to be a discussion on Uganda. And a day has been promised for Indian finance. Those days were promised as conditions of concluding the financial business; and an opportunity has also been promised for discussing the Eight Hours Bill. Beyond that we feel that it is impossible for us to go. I have now

endeavoured to state, as impartially as I can, the case upon which the Government make this request. It rests with the majority of the House to determine how it will dispose of its time, and it is for them to determine whether they are disposed to bestow on the Government that time which we consider absolutely essential to enable the Government to fulfil the duties that have been imposed upon them by the majority of the House and by the majority of the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That for the remainder of the Session Government Business do have priority on Tuesday. That on Friday the House do meet at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to Tuesday and the Morning Sitting on Friday."—(*Sir W. Harcourt.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : Whatever we may think of the substance of the demand made upon us by the right hon. Gentleman, nobody who has heard his speech will accuse him of adopting, in recommending the substance of the Motion to the House, a tone likely to embitter the Debate. He has made his speech and his proposal in a manner as likely to recommend it to his opponents as well as to his friends as, I think, was possible under the circumstances. Nevertheless, he will not be surprised to hear that, in however soft and tender accents he makes this proposal to us, the substance of his request is of such a character as to make it absolutely impossible for us to give a willing assent to the policy he asks us to accept. In the first place, I ask the House to note that the right hon. Gentleman has abandoned the course hitherto pursued by his predecessors in Office in asking the House to give up its time to the Government. He has not rested himself in any way upon precedent, but has laid down certain general propositions, which he thinks ought to command our assent. I do not, however, hesitate to say that the independent or the private Members of this House will practically give up all the rights which they have hitherto enjoyed if they assent to the propositions. It may or it may not be proper for the Government to make this claim upon us at this time. To that I shall address myself directly, but for any Government to come down to this House and say that, by the Standing Orders, the Government had only eight days a

month, which are quite inadequate for Government business, is practically to cut at the very root of every privilege which private Members enjoy, not merely at the beginning or end of the Session, but at any period of the Session, and I regret that the right hon. Gentleman has found it necessary to place his claim upon such very broad bases, and lay deep the foundations for future aggressions on the part of those who may succeed him in the office he holds. The right hon. Gentleman told us that he was not going to appeal to precedents, and I notice that those against whom precedents tell usually prefer to go to first principles to support their proposals. It is a very natural taste, and the right hon. Gentleman has laid before us the first principles to which he appeals with all his accustomed clearness. And what are they? He says that the responsible Government of the day, the creation of the majority of the House, are bound to carry through certain classes of business, which he proceeded to specify. He gave the first place to Supply, and I should be quite ready to make this concession to the right hon. Gentleman, that if Supply really was taken at a convenient period of the Session before the House was utterly worn out towards the middle or end of it, private Members would probably have very little cause to complain, because it is upon Supply that private Members can with most effect bring forward their grievances. It is upon Supply that private Members can best bring forward their own views, and can best criticise the action of the Government in Office. I am not complaining of the right hon. Gentleman bringing Supply on at a late period of the Session. That has been the course adopted by his own Government, by many previous Governments, and the late Government. But even if he is going to put down Supply in the list of the business that the Government has got to get through, and is going to quote Supply as a reason why private Members should be expected to lose their privileges at the early part of the Session, then I think private Members have a right on their part to demand that the Government should bring on Supply at a time when private Members are able adequately to discuss it. But no such promise was given by the right hon.

Sir W. Harcourt

Gentleman; no hint was given by him that a different course would be taken with regard to Supply than that which was adopted by them last year and by us in the year before. I presume, therefore, that they will carry out their own policy and their predecessors' policy, and relegate Supply to a period when practically a full discussion of the Estimates and of the principles underlying the Estimates is really withdrawn from the great mass of the House of Commons. Having dealt with Supply and casually mentioned a certain amount of non-Party legislation which the Government have to get through, the right hon. Gentleman went on to talk of Party measures, and he appeared to think that there were those on this side of the House who objected to bringing forward such measures. If there be such critics I do not rank myself among them. Of course, the Government exist for the purpose of bringing forward Party measure, and the Opposition, as an Opposition, exist for the purpose of criticising them. I make no complaint of the action of the Government in producing Party measures, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will make no complaint when we proceed to criticise them. But what I do complain of is that the Government are so long in bringing forward these controversial measures. The Queen's Speech has not been before us very long, but, after all, it has been before us for upwards of a month, and the Government have not yet brought forward these controversial matters of which we have heard so much in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He will say, "Oh, that is because we had to pass a certain amount of financial business before Easter, which took up the whole time of the House, the whole time of the Government, and the whole time of private Members, and you cannot complain of us for deferring to the present period these controversial measures which it is our business to lay before the House." But the Government have not made the best of their opportunities. What have they done since we met? I give them all the time before Easter. Granted that they were to occupy us as they chose to occupy us during the whole of last summer, last autumn, last winter, and this spring, then I admit that in this Session before Easter they

had no time or opportunity to bring in any of their measures. But since Easter they have had all the ordinary advantages which a Government possess of the days allocated by the Standing Orders of the House. How have they spent those days? Have they spent them by bringing forward these controversial measures? Not a bit of it. Those measures are still to be brought forward. We are still ignorant of what they are; and all we have had is this foolish proposal about a Scotch Committee, which is not legislation at all, but which is, as far as I can gather, the fad of a single Minister and of a single section in the House. It has occupied all the time of the Government since Easter, and, as far as I am able to forecast its future, it is likely to occupy a good deal more if they insist upon proceeding with it. What is the use of coming down to the House when you mismanage your business in this fashion, and making this appeal on the merits, because, forsooth, more than eight days in the month are required by the Government for forcing through the House the controversial measures referred to? I could have wished that if the right hon. Gentleman found it out of his power, or inexpedient, for the purpose of controversy to go into a discussion of past precedents, he had at all events exercised his ingenuity in giving to us a forecast of his future action. We have had no forecast. No attempt has been made by the right hon. Gentleman on behalf of the Government to tell us when he means to bring on Supply, and in what order he means to bring on the measures of the Government, or what measures the Government hope to pass. The whole future of the Session is absolutely obscure. We do not know what the Government intend, or what they mean to carry through, and in this state of absolute darkness we are asked to vote away our privileges. I do not think it is my special business to stand up here as a guardian of those whom the right hon. Gentleman calls unofficial Members. Perhaps I may observe that he rather prided himself on the phrase "unofficial Members," and I think with small reason. The term unofficial Members is extremely inconvenient and misleading. Gentlemen on this Bench are unofficial Members; but according to the ordinary

usages of the House, they are not private Members, and when the two Front Benches are joined together in a common condemnation by private Members, it is evident that they include us who are, nevertheless, despite what the right hon. Gentleman says, undoubtedly unofficial Members.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I meant to characterise them as ex-official Members.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: By private Members I mean gentlemen in the House who do not sit on these two Benches, and by non-private Members I mean those who hold or have held office. It is not my special business to stand up for the rights of private Members as distinguished from official or ex-official Members, and I am bound to say that the levity with which private Members are now in the habit of passing through Resolutions in which it is doubtful if they believe, and in which it is certain their Leaders do not believe—and Resolutions which everybody knows will be inoperative and so much waste paper—makes me feel that possibly we might employ our time sometimes much better than we did at a late hour last Tuesday. It is not impossible that the Government have in view a similar misuse of the time of the House with regard to next Tuesday, and they probably share my view that, if the House of Commons is to discuss the abolition of the House of Lords in the same spirit in which it discussed Scotch Home Rule, there is no Government business which would not afford a better means of spending our time, or a better field for displaying our energy. But though I do not feel that I am bound to stand up for private Members, I must express my opinion that they have been extremely ill-used in the course of the last and the present year. Recollect that one consequence of taking every day in the week for Government business is not merely that you deprive private Members of their legitimate opportunities of bringing forward subjects of interest to them, but you double the work of private Members. A private Members' night is a private Members' night in two senses of the word. It is a private Members' night, because some bring on Motions and discussions on that night, while others go home to bed and do not return. They, therefore, have a double privilege on these nights, and

when by this cruel Resolution you propose to deprive them of these privileges at one blow I think it is rather hard. Probably, if the right hon. Gentleman had gone back to the precedent which he despises, he would have found that there have been cases where Tuesday mornings have been taken as early in the Session as in this year, but they have only been taken before Easter when private Members have had their fling. Well, Sir, private Members have had no fling for nearly 12 months. For nearly 12 months these unfortunate legislators have never been permitted the luxury of a count; they have been dragged down to the House night after night, never to do their own business, but always to do the business of the Government. Having given up without a murmur every hour of their time before Easter to aid the Government in getting through the necessary financial business, I do think it is rather hard to come down 10 days after the Easter holiday—having taken care to waste every one of these 10 days yourselves—and ask them to give up a great deal more of their time to the Government. I think that is very unkind, and the right hon. Gentleman must know that, as far as we are concerned, we cannot willingly assent to the proposal he has made. But at the end of his speech he ceased to endeavour to persuade his opponents, and turned round for a vote of confidence to his friends. Sir, I am sure that that vote of confidence will be given. The Government must have sunk low indeed if upon a mere question of the management of the business of the House they cannot bring into the Lobby a sufficient number of their own friends to support them. But I did not quite follow the poetical metaphor with which the right hon. Gentleman closed his speech. As far as I understood it, he was the captain of a ship bearing a precious cargo not particularly specified in any invoice that I know of, and we are the winds and the waves, so far as I can make out, which are threatening that vessel with shipwreck. Well, Sir, I do not know whether the metaphor is a very good one, but it certainly expresses, I should think, very accurately some phases of the present situation. I myself am not endowed by nature with the qualities to make me enjoy a sea voyage, but I can only hope

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that the Government are happier in their vessel than I should be in any vessel, even a more seaworthy one than that of the Government. I am afraid, Sir, that they have more formidable dangers before them than the horrors of sea sickness. I think I see traces of the fact that the winds and waves, as the right hon. Gentleman expresses it, are gradually making their impression on that vessel, and that leaks—not very formidable leaks, perhaps—have been sprung, and have been stopped by methods of a not very permanent character. Meanwhile, however, I may reassure the right hon. Gentleman by saying that, whatever may be his future destiniies, I do not think he is likely to suffer shipwreck to-day. The winds and the waves on this occasion, as on others, will do their best to impede his course, but he will survive our efforts. I do not think, however, that he has, either from the general point of view or from the point of view of the unofficial Members, shown any sufficient reason why we should give him privileges which in similar circumstances have never been asked for by his predecessors in Office.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said, he was one of the unofficial Members who occupied one of the two first places affected by the Motion of the Government. He was not going to dispute the right of the Government to take the time of the House, but the Government must have known for weeks that about this time it would be necessary to take the whole time of the House, and he complained that they did not give notice four weeks ago of their intention, in order that hon. Members might be saved the necessity and worry of the ballot, and still more the necessity of getting up subjects. To-morrow night he should have had the opportunity, but for this Motion, of calling attention to the financial condition of India in relation to Great Britain, and he complained that they should be discussing the question of taking Tuesday only on the day before. Why should they not have got a month's notice? A cook got a month's notice, and surely a Member of Parliament ought to get as much. He trusted that in future the Government would, when they foresaw the necessity of taking the whole time of the House, give due notice to hon. Members, so as

to avoid difficulties and heartburnings, and appeals for exceptions. For himself, much as he appreciated the position he occupied for the two days which would be affected by this Motion, and highly as he appreciated the subjects he had intended to bring forward, he must say honestly that he appreciated the stability of the Government more, and although it was a sacrifice, he would support the Government in a Division which would rob him of his privileges. He appreciated the advantages of a Liberal Government more than any private Motion that he could bring on, and for that reason he should support the Government in the Division.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham), as an agricultural Member, desired to utter one or two words of earnest protest against the course which the Government had seen fit to adopt. Important as were all those questions, the consideration and discussion of which might be affected by the course of the Government, he ventured to say that none of them equalled in importance the great question of agricultural depression. How could the Party opposite and the Government any longer keep up their pretence of sympathy with the agricultural interest? He did not think the agricultural labourers would now continue to be their dupes. This ought to be the finishing touch to that gigantic fraud which, he was sorry to say, the Government had, with some success, carried out before the country during the last few years. It should be the last straw which should break the camel's back. What had been the conduct of the Government in regard to agriculture, and how had they redeemed those numerous promises with which they had deceived and cajoled the agricultural labourers? They granted a Commission to inquire into what everyone knew already, except the Minister of Agriculture—namely, the causes of agricultural depression; but when any remedy was proposed or desire evinced to bring this great question before the country, how were they (the Opposition) met? They were either opposed or snubbed. He called to witness as to this the way in which a deputation on a most important question was received the other day by the Minister of Agriculture. That was the way in which agricultural interests

were treated, and now, when at last a chance was offered to bring the question of this great agricultural depression before the House and the country by discussing the Motion of which the hon. Member for Essex had given notice for Tuesday week, how were they treated? Again the Government interposed, and by this most arbitrary and uncalled-for action made any discussion impossible. There were two things, to his mind, absolutely clear: first of all, that the Government were utterly incapable of managing the affairs of this country; and, secondly, that they were supremely indifferent to the agricultural interests.

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Waterford): I am not one of those Members who sympathise very much with the grievances of private Members. I have sat now in this House for 12 years, and my experience has been that the time devoted to private Members has not, on the whole, been very productive of good to the country, and I am bound to say, Sir, the Resolution proposed by the Leader of the House, if carried, would, in my judgment, leave a sufficient portion of every week available for private Members. It would leave Wednesday absolutely free for private Members to bring forward their Bills, and leave the evening sitting on Friday also available for the discussion of private Members' grievances. We cannot afford to forget the experience of past years, as indeed has been alluded to by the Leader of the Opposition—that when private Members have come down to this House to discuss these private Members' grievances, other private Members have taken advantage of the occasion to stay away from the House, with the result that the House was counted out and valuable time lost. Therefore, if the Government of the day has the confidence of the majority of the House of Commons, and the majority of the country, and if that Government has serious and important legislative work to perform, then, for my part, I think the supporters of the Government are justified in coming for at least as much of the time of the House as is asked for in this Resolution. But having said so much, I desire to press respectfully upon the Government for some information as to what the public business is that they intend to proceed with. This is an occa-

sion upon which it seems to me that possibly a good turn may be done for the interests of the county I represent if Irish Members would use the opportunity of endeavouring to extract from the Government some promise as to their course of procedure with reference to Irish measures. I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that in the course of the Queen's Speech the first measure mentioned was an Irish measure, touching very nearly an important Irish question—that is the question of the evicted tenants. That measure was put in the very forefront of the Queen's Speech; but on the very first night, I think, of the discussion on the Address to the Throne, I and some other Members asked from the Government an assurance that the place accorded to that Bill in the Gracious Speech from the Throne would be observed in the order of Business during the Session. We had, Sir, a right to claim that that Bill should have precedence, because the House will remember how that question of the evicted tenants in Ireland has been treated. The House will remember that when this Government came into power in the month of August they were pressed to call an Autumn Session of Parliament together for dealing with that question, and many people thought in Ireland that the opportunity thus afforded would be the best opportunity available for the Government to settle this question. Very many people, even at that time, immediately after the General Election had taken place, when the opposition to the Government had not become so embittered as it afterwards did, owing to the discussions on the Home Rule Bill and other matters, thought that then possibly many of the landlord class in Ireland would have been willing to make a compromise on this question, and the Bill might have been passed into law. The claim that was then made on the Government was rejected by them, and, in spite of the protests which were made, they adjourned the meeting of Parliament for six months, and they issued a Commission to inquire into facts which were notorious, which every man in Ireland and out of it was perfectly well acquainted with. Then, when the next Session of Parliament assembled, of course the Home Rule Bill took precedence of the question of the evicted tenants, and

again an Autumn Session was called last year. We asked from the Government for a limited portion of that Autumn Session to deal with the question of the evicted tenants, and again our claim was rejected. And what was the excuse made? I am speaking by the card when I say that upon 100 platforms it was stated that the Government refused to introduce this Bill in the Autumn Session because they intended in the Session of this year to make the evicted tenants' question the chief, the most urgent, and the first measure they would introduce, and, therefore, we asked on the Debate on the Address to the Throne whether the place accorded in the Queen's Speech to that measure would be maintained. We got an unsatisfactory answer, and it appears now that the measure is to be put back until after the Registration Bill has been passed into law. That much we know; we do not know how much further back still it may be put in the future. We do know, however, it is not to be taken until after the Registration Bill. I hope that the proposals which the Chief Secretary is going to put forward will be laid before the House and the country immediately. But even that is not sufficient. Having done that, it is the right hon. Gentleman's duty to press on with the Bill as fast as possible. I see no reason why it should be put into a position next to the Registration Bill. I am not saying that the whole of the time of the House during the next few weeks should be devoted to this question alone; but I say it is not too much for us to say that the Registration Bill and the Evicted Tenants Bill should be taken *pari passu*. But instead of that it appears to be the intention of the Government to put back the Evicted Tenants Bill until the Registration Bill has passed into law. After that the Government is to consider whether this Bill shall have the second or what place. There appears to me to be some competition between the backers of the Evicted Tenants Bill and the backers of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. Of course, the Welsh Disestablishment Bill is one which has my very hearty sympathy—first upon its merits, and also because of the many obligations which we are under to the Welsh Members who desire to have it passed. After

all, charity begins at home. The Welsh Disestablishment Bill cannot be so urgent for the Welsh Members as the Evicted Tenants Bill is for us. I have mentioned these matters because I think it is due to the House and due also to Ireland that before Irish Members are asked to vote in favour of the Government proposal to give all the time of the House to Ministers it is right to inquire from the Government some assurance of what the course of public business will be in reference to these Irish questions. I have stated elsewhere, and I state here, that I am greatly afraid that the chance of passing the Evicted Tenants Bill into law has enormously diminished, if not entirely disappeared, through the delay which has already taken place. The duty of introducing that Bill and passing it into law rests with the Government because of the pledges which have been given in their name; and it is a violation of the spirit of those pledges to postpone any further the introduction of this Bill to restore tenants to their homes as promised by the right hon. Gentleman, who is a Member of the present Cabinet. Under these circumstances I, for one, although I have little sympathy with the claims of private Members, will not take the responsibility of voting in favour of the Motion of the Leader of the House unless we receive an assurance that this Bill will be introduced at once and pushed forward step by step with the Registration Bill, and not be relegated to the end of the year, when some crisis may precipitate a Dissolution, and the Session end without any serious attempt having been made to grapple with the matter. I hope the Government will state their mind openly upon this matter, seeing that up to the present they have spoken no straightforward word upon it, but have contented themselves with expressions of goodwill and sympathy to the evicted tenants without saying what practical step they would take to restore them to their homes and to bring this Bill to a successful issue.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman seems to call for some remarks from myself. Those remarks will be very short, and I am afraid that in the course of them I shall not be able

to inform the hon. Member of what he professes a desire to know—namely, the precise order and place we shall give in the business of the Government to the Evicted Tenants Bill: because we are now asking the House two things—first of all, to show that they have confidence in the Government, by placing time at its disposal for the accomplishment of the work they have in hand; and, second, to leave the distribution of that time in the hands of the Government, so that they may dispose of it in the way which to them seems most fit. The hon. and learned Member has related the history of the dealings of the present Government with the question of the evicted tenants, into which I do not think it would be right or relevant that I should follow him. He says we ought to have had an Autumn Session in 1892 in order to bring forward an Evicted Tenants Bill, which he believes would then have had a good chance of becoming law. I think I know as much about the inner concerns of the evicted tenants' question as the hon. and learned Gentleman, and all I can say is that unless all the information which I had at my disposal was faulty, it is not correct to say that the measure, if brought forward that year, was likely to receive the support of the Irish landlords in this House or elsewhere. Apart from that matter, I entirely deny the hon. and learned Member's assertion that the Autumn Session of 1892 was a favourable time for bringing forward that matter. The appointment of the Commission is an old story, and has been fully discussed in this House; but I do say that Commission was the means of collecting and bringing to light information without which no Bill could have been adequately and efficiently presented to this House. The hon. and learned Gentleman cannot suppose that I, who am responsible for the administration in Ireland, am likely to allow the Evicted Tenants Bill to fall into such a position that it would be put out of our power to pass it into law this Session. I have said again and again in this House that I am as alive as any Irish Member, and more alive, perhaps, than some Irish Members, as to the urgent importance, if it can possibly be done, of persuading this House, and it might be another House, to pass this measure into law.

Mr. J. Morley

I do not despair of bringing in that measure in a form which ought to command the assent of every reasonable man, both in this House and elsewhere. This is one of the measures for which we are asking that the time of the House should be given to us. The hon. and learned Member, and other Irish gentlemen interested in this matter, may rest assured that there is no intention whatever to play with this important question. On the other hand, we shall keep it where it now is, in the front rank of the measures with which we are prepared to go in this Session.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced this matter in a tone so moderate and mild, and his speech was dealt with afterwards so humorously by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, that I think it is possible that the extreme importance and magnitude of the change which it is now proposed to make in our Parliamentary practice may have escaped the observation of the House. That it is a change of great importance and magnitude is shown convincingly by the speech to which we have just listened from the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who, falling as is his wont into terms which exceed in definiteness those of his colleagues, has made it clear for the first time that the Government are asking us to deal with the question of the disposal of the time of the House in the shape of a challenge upon a Vote of Confidence. I have never known before, upon a question of this kind, anything like the solemnity of the appeal which has been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary to their followers to follow them into their Lobby upon this matter. As a rule, this excessive pressure has not been brought to bear upon the Members of a Party when a question of this kind is brought forward, and I think the House may fairly conceive that there is some good reason for it upon the present occasion. Why should we regard this as a matter of extreme importance? I suppose that, according to the definition given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Leader of the Opposition, I am a private Member of this House. I do not sit upon either Front Bench, and

I was not a Member of either of the two last Governments. Although I am a private Member, I do not stand here as an advocate of their claims, and I may frankly confess that I do not care a brass button what becomes of them. I have never seen any great utility in the discussions which under our present system take place on private Members' nights. It would be altogether different if the House had a power of selection; but I find that, according to our present practice, it is almost always the greatest bore who gets the first place. But although he is able to get the first place, he is not able to get Members to come and hear him; and the result is, that the time of the House, which might be much better occupied, is entirely wasted. Therefore, while I acknowledge the magnitude of the change, I rejoice that for the first time we have a Government which comes here and says that it is for the majority of the House—that is, the Party majority—to dispose of the time of the House, and proceeds to dispose of the time of the House by cutting the ground altogether from under private Members. The sham of private Members, after the vote which I suppose will be taken to-night, will be once for all disposed of. Hereafter every Government which desires time for its own measures will be entitled at the very beginning of the Session, before private Members have had a single day at their disposal, to come down and quote this precedent and say “the time of the House belongs to the Party majority, and the Government of the day make it a matter of confidence that they should have the whole time of the House.” [*Cheers.*] Now, Sir, no doubt that is a change of very great magnitude which appears to be willingly accepted by my hon. Friends below me, and which undoubtedly will serve as a most useful precedent in the future. Therefore, so far as private Members are concerned, I do not feel at all antagonistic to the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I do feel disinclined to give more time to this Government. I have no objection whatever to take it away from private Members, but I do not see that these gentlemen deserve it, and I do not see that they are in need of it, or that they have made out any case whatever. I have heard a good number of

discussions on similar points, and hitherto always two things have had to be shown, or at all events two points have been brought against the Government, and they have been asked to show reason in reference to them: the first is, that there is an emergency which justifies the demand for time; and the second is, that this emergency is not the result of gross mismanagement on the part of the Government. I remember in the time of the late Government they had to ask for the whole time of the House, but they never asked for it so early as it is asked for on this occasion. At that time my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton invariably attacked the then Leader of the House, and said it was a monstrous proposition, that he and his Government had got themselves into a hole through gross mismanagement, and that, under the circumstances, there was no justification for giving them the whole time of the House. I assume, at any rate, I am justified in applying the same sort of test to the present proposal. If there be an emergency, it is wholly the fault of the Government, and why should we give them more time under the circumstances? They have misused the time they have had, and what ground have we for supposing that they will make any better use of the time for which they ask? What is the emergency? The emergency consists in the fact that this is April 9. Is there not a little confusion in the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? What has the fact that it is April 9 got to do with the question? It shows that we are in the fourth month of the year, and is it because we are in the fourth month of the year that he thinks the period has come for asking for the whole time of the House? Usually, we have considered this question with regard to the time of the Session. As regards the Session, we are in the first month, and, as far as we have gone, the Government have every reason to congratulate themselves on the generosity of the House. They have got more in a month than the late Government ever got in two months. They have got the whole of the Supplementary Estimates and part of the ordinary Estimates. They have concluded the financial business of the year, and they have introduced and

taken the First Readings of one or two Bills. What more do they want in a month of only eight days of Government time? Under those circumstances, it is perfectly absurd to pretend that there is any emergency. It may be said, and it is quite true, that, although this is only the first month of the Session, it is the fourth month of the year. If we are to consider January and February and part of March as part of this Session, and if we are to deal with the matter as though we were in the fourth month of the Session, we must consider what was done in January and February. The Government would be in the position of a Government which in the fourth month of the Session had already succeeded in passing two Bills of first-rate importance—the Parish Councils Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill—and had, in addition, accomplished the other work to which I have referred, and who then came down prepared to make arrangements for winding up the Session. Under these circumstances, the first thing we should expect the Government to do is to tell us what Bills they are going to drop. The illustration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a very unfortunate one, and when it has been so heckled by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition I am almost ashamed to return to it. I must, however, point out that when a vessel in the position in which he describes himself and crew—a vessel which some of us think is badly managed and overladen, and which, as he says, has got, above all, to get to a fixed destination—finds itself in trouble, in a storm or a hurricane, those in charge jettison a part of the cargo. If the time has come when we must consider that we are in the fourth month of the Session, I think we have a right to call upon the Government to jettison a part of their cargo, and no longer to flourish in our faces the mere pretence, as we all know it is, of a whole number of Bills, like the Evicted Tenants Bill and a great number of others that had been put down for electoral purposes without the slightest chance of being proceeded with. I now come to consider whether this so-called emergency—which I do not think is an emergency at all—is not due to the mismanagement of the business of the House by the present Government. I will put my charge against the Government in one word—

that they have wasted an immense amount of time in pressing forward a Bill which has not a hearty supporter even on their own side. I refer, of course, to the Home Rule Bill. I say there is not a single section of the Party which supports the Government which was heartily in favour of the Home Rule Bill. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] Certainly not the Irish Members—certainly not either section of the Irish Members, at whose instigation the Bill was presumably brought in, but both of which sections took opportunity again and again in the course of debate to show that they regarded it as a very imperfect satisfaction of their demands. And certainly no one here can honestly say that it was a Bill which was popular with the constituencies in the country. That is what has made the difficulty. Had that been a popular Bill the whole course of matters would have been perfectly simple; for when that Bill was defeated the Government would have appealed to the country, and if they had come back, as they would have come back, on the hypothesis that the Bill was popular, with as large or a larger majority, they would have been able to proceed with the Bill with every chance of immediate success. But they did not dare to go to the country on that Bill. There is not a man on this side of the House who will contradict me when I say that not one of them advised the Government to take a Dissolution on the Home Rule Bill. There is not a single one of them who believes that, if they had taken a Dissolution on that Bill, they could possibly have obtained a majority. As the Government did not dare to take their principal measure, which had never been before the country, and obtain a decision upon it, what was the position in which they found themselves? They were bound to endeavour to retrieve the situation by bringing in a whole lot of other measures which they thought would be more popular than the Home Rule Bill. This is the reason why the Queen's Speech has been crammed on two occasions with the most contentious items of the Newcastle Programme, and that is the meaning of the Autumn Session which has brought about the state of things in which we find ourselves. Even then the Government did not carry out their policy properly. Their object was a bad object, because I

call it neither more nor less than an attempt to deceive the constituencies of the country. I call it nothing more nor less than an attempt to take the decision of the country upon the wrong issue. But, even if the object were right, the methods by which they endeavoured to secure it have been entirely wrong. What ought they to have done? They know what they ought to have done, because they professed when they asked for the Autumn Session that they would bring forward non-contentious Bills. They brought forward Bills which, so far as principle was concerned, were non-contentious. I refer to the Employers' Liability Bill and the Parish Councils Bill; but when those Bills came into the House how did the Government treat them? The Employers' Liability Bill was conducted throughout, I do not hesitate to say, by the Home Secretary in a more aggressive manner than any Bill in our time. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] Does anyone deny that? Will anyone tell me of any other Bill of the same importance upon which the Minister conducting it has refused every single Amendment which was moved by his opponents? I do not believe such a case can be quoted; and I go further, and say—

MR. ASQUITH: My right hon. Friend has made an assertion as to facts on most imperfect information. He was not present in the House when a great part of the Debate on that Bill took place. I will inform him that there was hardly a single clause in the Bill as it left this House which was not amended, and in which Amendments proceeding from the right hon. Gentleman's own friends were not accepted by the Government.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: It is quite true that I was not present during the whole of the Debate; but I am able to read, and I have read most carefully all that took place. The right hon. Gentleman says he accepted a number of Amendments. Yes, he did; he accepted an immense number of Amendments from his own side. But my point is, that he did not accept one single Amendment, except formal Amendments, not one Amendment of the slightest importance from his opponents.

MR. W. M'LAREN: Yes, he did. There was my own Amendment.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, I know; but do you call that an Amendment from an opponent?

*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is not entitled to go into a discussion as to the details of the proceedings upon the Employers' Liability Bill.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am much obliged to you, Sir. I am afraid I was about to be led away by the interruption to which I was subjected. My point is, however, simple. I say, as regards the Employers' Liability Bill, there was, in effect, one Amendment of great importance urged on the right hon. Gentleman even by his own supporters, which he refused, and before which, in a fit of temper, he dropped the Bill. The Parish Councils Bill was introduced in a most conciliatory speech by the Secretary of State for India, and had he been allowed his way that Bill would have been carried in less than half the time which it actually took. I do not hesitate to say that many weeks of the time of the House were wasted because the right hon. Gentleman was put aside by his colleagues, and highly contentious matter was introduced at the last moment into the Bill. I say, under these circumstances, the Government have no one to thank but themselves for the condition in which they find themselves. They occupied the House until the 5th of March, or an Autumn Session they ought never to have held at all, and which in any event ought to have been concluded before Christmas, and it is because of the manner in which they treated those two Bills, which were brought in before the Autumn Session, that we find ourselves now on April 9 without having made any considerable progress with the legislation of the present Session. Nor in this Session have they done much better. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the extraordinary folly of the Government in introducing a highly contentious Constitutional question like the Scotch Committee question at a time when, as they say, they cannot possibly deal with the important business which they have put upon the Paper. Why did they not introduce the Registration Bill instead of the Scotch Committee? I beg to warn the Government that, if they go on with the Scotch Committee proposal, they will waste at

least two, and very likely three, weeks of the time of the House. Do not let me be misunderstood. I do not mean the discussion upon the Committee. That, of course, will be concluded in a comparatively limited space of time; but just see how a proposal of that kind will affect all our business. Already notices are down to refer Bills coming before us to a Committee of London Members, and I suppose a similar Motion will be made with regard to Welsh Bills. I think you will find that if this proposition is carried out the question will be continually cropping up in the course of the Session, and there will be a most unjustifiable waste of time in reference to a proposal which is brought before us by the Government as though it were a matter of business of comparatively small importance. I think I have shown that not only is there no emergency, but that the delay in business is entirely due to the attitude of the Government. Under these circumstances, I do not think they have the slightest right to call upon us to give them all the time of the House. What use are they going to make of it? Will they tell us now in what order they are going to take their Bills? If they continue to go on as they have been doing we shall only have a repetition of what occurred last Session. We shall only have a waste of time and temper without being much more forward at the end of the Session than we are at the beginning. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to admit that the Government made a mistake last Session, because he said there seemed to be a universal agreement that business ought not be conducted in the same way this Session as it was last Session. But unless the Government are willing not only to continue this Session for an unusual time, but to have an Autumn Session, it is impossible for them to make any reasonable progress with the Bills they have put in the Queen's Speech. It is perfectly well-known that if there is kept hanging before the House of Commons a large number of Bills, one is apt to interfere with the others. It would be a much more straightforward course and a much better course for the progress of business if the Government would undertake to say what are the Bills to which they attach importance, and then we should know upon official authority that as regards the other Bills

in the Queen's Speech they are put there for show, and not with any idea of serious progress. There is only one other suggestion I have to make to the Government. I see they are in really an embarrassing condition. I am afraid these difficulties will crop up again and again. I do not think that if they got the whole of the time of the House they would be able to do much better than they are doing now, and I would advise them to cut the Gordian knot at once and give us a Dissolution.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had commenced by saying that he was neither an official nor an unofficial Member. He (Mr. Labouchere) wondered what he was. In his opinion, the right hon. Gentleman was neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor good red herring. He thought he had never heard a speech which had gone so much round the subject without coming to the actual question before the House as the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. It appeared that the right hon. Gentleman did not care one brass farthing for private Members, but that whilst he did not want them to have the time of the House he did not want the Government to have it. Who, then, in the name of wonder, was to have the time of the House unless it was to be the right hon. Gentleman himself? Was the House to have speeches inflicted upon it by the right hon. Gentleman every evening? The right hon. Gentleman said the Government had mismanaged their affairs. He (Mr. Labouchere) had not perceived that the Government had more mismanaged their affairs than every Government he had known had done. They commenced the Session late. That was not their fault. [*Opposition cries of "No!"*] Well, it was their misfortune and not their fault. They had to go through Supply, and it was impossible to say that they had mismanaged their business on the three Government days which had since elapsed. As to the Scotch Grand Committee, he could not understand how any English Members could object to allowing the Scotch Members to leave other Members in peace while they went into a room by themselves and discussed the Law of Hypothec or any other Scotch question. He should have thought that no proposal would have secured such

universal consent as a proposition of that character. The right hon. Gentleman said the Government mismanaged business last Session. Apparently, in the right hon. Gentleman's view, they were to be forced to waste the time of this Session because they wasted the time of last Session. The right hon. Gentleman complained that the Government had brought in last Session an Employers' Liability Bill, and had not been conciliatory over it, and he went on to suggest that they should be punished because the former President of the Local Government Board (Mr. H. H. Fowler) had been exceedingly conciliatory over the Parish Councils Bill. No matter what the Government did they would never find favour with the right hon. Gentleman. Whether they were conciliatory or unconciliatory; whether they wasted time last Session or not; whether they were anxious or not to waste time in the present Session, the right hon. Gentleman was prepared at any moment to make a speech against them and to find some recondite reasons for voting against that which he supported in former times. He (Mr. Labouchere) had noticed that almost every Member who had spoken had declared that for private Members he entertained the greatest contempt. From the Government point of view a private Member was a public nuisance. The private Member was expected to go down to the House and to hold his tongue; he was expected to cheer Ministers, to vote for them whatever they did, and invariably to declare that his Leaders were the wisest and best human beings in the world. When the Party was in Opposition, the private Member was told not to "let things go too quick," and he was expected to keep alight the sacred lamp of Opposition. Under these circumstances, he (Mr. Labouchere) thought that private Members were most useful, whether their Party was in power or was in Opposition. As to private Members' Motions, it was obvious that when 600 gentlemen balloted not very wise Motions would occasionally be brought forward. But, at the same time, the ballot sometimes gave priority to some very useful Motions. Last week a very valuable proposal in regard to Home Rule for Scotland was made by a private Member and was adopted by the House. Of course,

the adoption of that Motion would encourage Ministers to go on in the path of Home Rule. It had always been held that reforms were agitated outside the House at first; that they were then brought forward in the House by private Members' Motions, and such Motions were subsequently moved again and again until at last the majority became so large that the proposal was taken up by the Government. He never knew a Government yet that did not object to private Members' Motions, because very often a very nasty and inopportune Motion was placed on the Paper. The tendency of Governments on a variety of questions was to "sit on the fence," and the object of their supporters was to bring them over to their side of the fence. It frequently happened that, by means of a private Members' Motion, Ministers were obliged to show their hand and to adopt a course which they would not have adopted but for the bringing forward of that Motion. The same thing was always said on one side or the other in these Debates, the only difference being that when gentlemen were on the Treasury Bench they said one thing and when they were on the Front Opposition Bench they said the other. He was sorry the Government could not make an exception in favour of the Tuesday which had been obtained by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Mr. Dalziel). He was bound to say that if the Government were ready to leave the question concerning the House of Lords as it stood at present, he did not think their supporters need even complain of his hon. Friend's day being taken away. The House had passed a Resolution of a most drastic character in regard to the Lords. The majority of the House who had voted for that Motion stood on firm ground, for all they had to do was to call upon the Government to give effect to the will of the majority. If the Government were not prepared to do that, he confessed that, as far as he was concerned, they would not enjoy that amount of confidence which he at present entertained for them. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) in thinking that it was somewhat unfair on the part of the Government to make this question one of confidence. He had always thought that these matters were

left entirely to the discretion of the House. He himself had moved Amendments on proposals of this kind, and those Amendments had been accepted by the late Mr. W. H. Smith when Leader of the House. If he thought the Government would assent to an Amendment he should move one now, but he did not want Ministers to be turned out. If they chose to make this a question of confidence, they really obliged him to vote for them. He would not allude to all the measures that had been referred to in the Queen's Speech, for, to tell the truth, he did not believe that many of those measures would be brought in or carried. Members knew, however, that they would have a Budget. He hoped the Budget would be an excellent one, and he should be sorry if Ministers were deprived of the opportunity of bringing it on. He knew also that they meant to bring in a Registration Bill. He thought that before a General Election took place the franchise ought to be expanded more than it was at present, and it was, therefore, desirable that the Registration Bill should pass. Until, therefore, the two eggs of the Registration Bill and the Budget had been laid, and, if they were good eggs, hatched by the House, he should not vote against the Government on a mere matter of detail such as that which was now before the House when he was told that if they were beaten they would resign.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) had been quite correct in dividing Members into official Members, ex-official Members, and unofficial Members.

SIR W. HARCOURT: And double ex-official Members.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, he was not competent to dilate upon the last category mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman. Having occupied a seat in the House of Commons for a long time, and having sat on every Bench in it, with, he thought, scarcely an exception, he was of opinion that the description given by the right hon. Gentleman of the various classes of Members was a correct one, and it was certainly the one adopted by Mr. Disraeli and by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). To leave this somewhat technical point, he must enter a

most distinct protest against the manner in which a very formidable fundamental change not only of the Standing Orders of the House, but in the practice and Rules of Parliament, had been treated by the Government on this occasion. The House was asked to make a very stringent Regulation under which the Government might forward their business during the remainder of the Session. It was also asked to alter fundamentally the Standing Orders of the House. He had frequently seen Standing Orders of the House made subject to alteration, but how had these alterations been accomplished and prefaced? When they had been at all of a formidable and drastic character they had always been preceded by a thorough inquiry before a carefully-selected Committee of the House. He had known many such Committees appointed in his time. These Committees had been composed of the most experienced Members of the House, selected impartially from both sides with an admixture of Members of lesser experience, so as to make the Committee representative of all sections of the House. The Government had cast these precedents to the winds, and they seemed to think that a casual majority was to be at liberty at any moment to tear up Standing Orders, to be a law unto itself, and to establish such Rules as it thought fit for the purpose of driving through Party business according to the exigencies of its own political organisation. He ventured to say that was a revolutionary proposition. It was all very well to say the majority must prevail, and that that was to decide how this business was to be carried on. He (Mr. Lowther) could only say that search where they would through the annals of Parliament and the Constitutional history of this country no precedent for such a doctrine could be found. He would undertake to say that the Standing Orders of the House, originally framed with the utmost caution and care, had never been subjected to any permanent or *quasi*-permanent alteration without the most careful scrutiny and inquiry. Reference was made a short time ago to the proposal of the late Government with regard to carrying Bills over from one Session to another—a measure of which he strongly disapproved, and should have voted against

it if it had been pressed in the House of Commons. The Government of the day relegated that proposal to a Committee impartially chosen—chosen according to the recognised principle in which Committees had always been hitherto appointed—with the result that the proposal did not meet with sufficient support to justify the Government in proceeding with it. The Government, he said, had upset all precedents. But what did they now ask the House to do? They asked the House to hand over to them this additional time without having complied with another condition which under these circumstances was always recognised—and that statement he challenged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to contradict. In making an application of this kind it was customary for the Government to inform the House of the specific purposes for which they demanded the unusual facilities. The right hon. Gentleman opposite knew that towards the end of the Session or the close of the financial year the Government found that the state of business was such that additional facilities were urgently needed for the transaction of public business, and the practice had been to inform the House precisely how matters stood and state the actual measures that were urgent, and give an assurance that those measures and none other would be submitted for consideration. He defied any Member of Parliament, be his experience what it might, to controvert that statement. How did the Government propose to allocate this time? They were driven to the ordinary sources of information to arrive at any conclusion. He had a strong suspicion that this House was being made use of for purposes which were usually discharged by a vacant hoarding round a building in course of building on the streets. This House was to be made a block on which were to be plastered advertisements and sky-signs of the most hideous and ghastly description. So far from the time which the Government asked the House to place at their disposal being used for the purpose of making up arrears in the business of the country, it was for the purpose of advertisement—Party and political advertisement—that their time was to be appropriated and misused. He ventured to say that there

never had been a greater abuse of what he might call brute force and Party vote. Many Members who had preceded him had assumed that the Parliamentary conscience was sufficiently dead to swallow a proposition of this kind on purely Party grounds. He dared say hon. and right hon. Gentlemen had gauged the situation with adequate care and forethought. He regretted to find that there appeared to be very little disposition to discuss the question as one of great Constitutional precedent, but rather as an exhibition of Party strategy and political chicanery which either Party would be justified in using—or misusing. He was afraid that was the tendency of this Debate. His sympathies were with those who had hitherto had by the Standing Orders of the House certain privileges and facilities placed at their disposal by fundamental Rules which were not capable of being altered at the mere caprice of Ministers or will of a Party majority. He deeply regretted this dangerous innovation in Parliamentary practice. It was one which, he thought, boded ill to the independence of the House, and he trusted there would be many Members who would record an emphatic vote against it.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) said, that as far as the non-official or private Member was concerned, he had not received very much satisfaction from any of the Leaders of the Parties who had spoken during the Debate. There seemed to be only one opinion amongst the whole of these gentlemen, that was that having got beyond the necessity of using private Members' nights themselves they wanted to wreck them and take them away from other Members as speedily as possible. This Debate was one of the annual farces which occupied so much of the time of the House. If the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition really believed what they had hinted to-night, that so little good occurred from the advantages that private Members enjoyed, the sooner they made arrangements between themselves to alter the Standing Orders permanently the better it would be for procedure in the House. Private Members would then know that it was not worth their while putting their names down for the ballot and co-operating with their

friends and trying to get an expression of opinion upon some subject which they were deeply interested in, although it might not be interesting to the Party opposite. He hoped that if it was understood that Tuesdays were to go away from private Members, the change would be affected in a Constitutional manner in the future. There was nothing for which they had to thank the Leaders of the House. He was sorry the Government would not listen to the private Members who had gone through the ballot, and who represented a very strong body of opinion in the House. He had himself given notice of a Motion in reference to election expenses, a subject upon which some hon. Members held very strong opinions as to present arrangements. Of course it would be out of Order to discuss that matter, and he would only say they desired very earnestly to get an expression of opinion of the House how far they would go in the direction of giving equality of opportunity to poor men for entering the House. However, he was to be sacrificed with the rest of the Members who had already succeeded at the ballot. The course taken by the Opposition had made it impossible for this Motion to be discussed as it might have been as one with regard to the procedure of the House of Commons. The Opposition had chosen, as far as he could see, to make it an occasion of a Vote of Censure on Her Majesty's Government. The whole question of procedure had been put on one side, and they were not able, therefore, to take the action they should have liked to take with regard to the way in which the time of the House should be occupied. If they were to have an alteration in the procedure he sincerely hoped it would be made at once, and then private Members would know where they were; but he was one of those who took a different view as to what private Members had done in the past. He differed from those who thought that the action of those gentlemen had not been beneficial to the legislation of the country. Looking at the history of the country, some of the greatest reforms which had passed through Parliament had been introduced in the first instance, and pressed year after year whenever opportunity had offered, by some private Member who had started

alone or with only a small number of Members at his back; but by persistence, and by the growing strength of that small Party, those reforms had eventually been placed upon the Statute Book—not, he admitted, by the private Members themselves, because just as their efforts were coming to fruition the Government for the time being had taken up those measures, and had taken good care to secure all the reward due to the efforts of the private Members. He looked sadly, therefore, upon the way in which, during several past Sessions, the time of private Members had been gradually encroached upon, and if that kind of thing was to go on the sooner the private Member was swept out of existence in that House the better, and every Member would then recognise that he was only a voting machine when he took his seat within those walls.

MR. SETON-KARR (St. Helens) said, he hoped the hon. Member who had just sat down would have the courage of his convictions, and would oppose this proposal. They had not heard many protests from private Members in the House, but he ventured as one of them to oppose this most unprecedented proposal. He was not surprised at the Leaders of the House, of the Opposition, and of the little Unionist Party on the other side sneering at the rights of private Members, because they could get a hearing whenever they chose. They were in a very different position to the ordinary Members, and were not, as a matter of fact, affected in the least. What they were called upon to decide was whether they were to have any rights or privileges at all. These proposals hitherto, during the last few Sessions, had been supported by some kind of excuse, some kind of apology to the House from the Government for making that request; but on this occasion they had heard nothing of the kind. They were simply asked, practically, to establish the principle that in future private Members had no right except to vote. Private Members on the other side of the House need not be afraid of consequences if the Government were beaten. The Government had by this time got used to that operation. They were beaten on the Address, and had been beaten on the average about once a week ever since. Still, that did not seem to affect their position,

and therefore he did not see why hon. Members opposite need be afraid of voting in opposition to this dangerous proposal. Were private Members to have any rights at all? Arguments had been put forward that they did not make very good use of their time; but that had nothing to do with the question. If they did not choose to come down to the House on Tuesdays and Fridays, that was their own business; and he thought it was better sometimes that the House should be counted out than occupied in assisting the present Government to forward their measures. The question was, whether private Members were justified in supporting their own rights? If hon. Members opposite chose to vote like sheep, as if this was a Party question, the consequences must be on their own heads. He did not think, however, as far as Parties were concerned, they need be afraid of consequences. He had no desire to bring forward any special grievance of his own, though, as a matter of fact, he had put down a very useful Bill, which he thought would have received the sanction of the Government. They were, in fact, being deprived of the right to bring in private measures, and he could submit to the House a list of Bills and Resolutions by private Members which were quite as useful as anything the Government had brought forward. He regretted very much the attitude taken by the hon. Member opposite, who always, when he sat on that side of the House, used to be the guardian angel of private Members' rights. How he had come to change and run away from his principles it was hard to understand. His action that evening tended to destroy the last rag of faith in the consistency of eminent politicians. There was no reason, however, why other private Members on either side of the House should follow his example; and if they allowed themselves to be slaughtered on this occasion they would never get another chance. They would certainly lose their privileges if they failed to stand by one another.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, if anything would justify Her Majesty's Government in bringing this Motion before the House it would be the attacks made on this occasion. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had stated to the House and to the country

that private Members' Debates were useless, and that it would be far better there should be no opportunity afforded for such Debates to take place at all. That example had been followed by another right hon. Gentleman, for not only had he said that the private Members' evenings were employed uselessly, but he justified the proposal of the Government by saying that two or three weeks' additional time would be required before the Scotch Grand Committee could be carried through the House if the Government persevered in it. Clearly the plea for the private Members was a delusion and a farce. It was time that the Radicals on that side of the House had some kind of intimation of what the attitude of the Government was going to be towards the Second Chamber. It would be to the advantage of the Government, the House, and the country, if they had a Debate upon that question. He was simply putting that forward from a friendly point of view. The Government must feel strongly upon that point, for they had seen the work of last year thrown to the winds, and the prospect was that their work this year again would be practically useless. That seemed, therefore, one of the most pressing questions for the moment to the Government. He was content to rest in the belief that at the proper time, some occasion probably more favourable than the present, the Government would be prepared, not on a private Member's Motion, but upon their own initiative, to put forward a policy on the question. He had no doubt as to his duty upon the present proposal. Hon. Members opposite had invited them on that side of the House to join in defeating the Government. That was, in reality, the purpose they had in view, but the hon. Member opposite was hardly a skilful tactician if he thought he was going to take them with him into the Division Lobby. As far as he had had an opportunity of judging, none of them had any idea of taking action in the slightest degree embarrassing to the Government, in which they had complete confidence. They believed the Government were about to bring forward a programme which would justify them in giving it their confidence, and that this demand was made to enable them to carry through the programme to which they were

pledged. They would hold the Government responsible if those pledges were not fulfilled, and for those reasons they had no hesitation in giving the Government their support.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) moved to leave out the words "for the remainder of the Session," and to insert "until Whitsuntide." A great deal might be said for the Resolution if there were any fear that the present congestion would still be existing in three or four weeks' time. That was a matter which rested not with Members of the House but with Her Majesty's Government. As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had pointed out, it was for the Government to state how much of their proposed legislation they intended to go on with and how much of it they meant to abandon, and by that means lighten the ship. If they would get rid of part of their cargo the congestion would be to a great extent relieved, and a good deal of valuable time would be left to private Members. He pointed out the absence of any proviso that this appropriation by the Government of the whole time of the Session would not be extended to any Autumn Session. It had always been agreed that whenever such a demand was made it should only be for the Session and should not extend beyond. With regard to the limitation to Whitsuntide, the Government would themselves admit that the time after that was not of such great value to them. In the first place, before Whitsuntide the Budget had been introduced, and as they were told that this year the Budget was going to be of great interest and of supreme importance, it would be better if the discussion upon it could proceed virtually *de die in diem*, if it was going to be very controversial and to contain, as was stated, matters of great moment. Therefore, as regarded taking the whole time of the House for that particular measure, he did not believe there would be strong opposition from any part of the House. But what they did object to was that the whole of the private Members' time should be sacrificed for the purpose of introducing and parading a number of Government Bills which it was impossible could ever become law. That would be a deliberate and indefensible waste of time. Upon that point he would earnestly appeal to hon. Mem-

bers opposite who were interested in Private Bills, because after Whitsuntide Tuesday evenings were of great value to private Members, because Bills which had then reached any stage were proceeded with; and private Members' Motions never had the same amount of vitality after as they had before Whitsuntide, if very substantial progress was not made with them. He therefore appealed to hon. Members opposite for their support on this occasion. Allusion had been made to the Evicted Tenants Bill, the Local Veto Bill, and the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. Did hon. Members prefer to see a merely formal introduction of those measures, or did they prefer that progress should be made with useful legislation of their own? Then several contentious measures, like the Rating of Machinery Bill, had been mentioned, raising questions which ought to be taken seriously into consideration. Most heartrending appeals were made to hon. Members last Session in charge of Bills, which they had got read by overwhelming majorities, not to press them, and they were asked whether, as they could not be passed owing to the Government taking the time of the House, they would not allow them to be referred to Select Committees? They recognised that impossibility, but should have thought of that before giving up their rights to the Government. It was very easy to be wise after the event; and if private Members wished to have a chance for their measures they must make up their minds now which way they would act. If they would vote for his Amendment they would know they had done their best to forward their own Bills; but if they did not they could not in justice expect hon. Members on that side of the House to strike a blow for them to enable them to pass their Bills into law. He was sorry one hon. Member was absent who last Session, when this proposal was made, said he would always, no matter what Government was in power, stand up for the rights of private Members, but would give the Government the time they wanted for the purpose of passing the Home Rule Bill. The hon. Member for Sunderland then said, as the occasion was exceptional, he would not struggle for private Members' rights, for it was not every year that the Government had to remodel the Con-

stitution. It was to be hoped the Government did not intend to remodel the Constitution this year, and he therefore hoped his Amendment would be supported. This was not a merely temporary alteration which the Government was making, but they were absolutely going to the whole root of Parliamentary procedure. Unless private Members would unite to strike a blow now, it would be absolutely useless for them to attempt any private legislation whatever, and he earnestly appealed to them for support.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "for the remainder of the Session," in order to insert the words "until Whitsuntide." — (*The Marquess of Carmarthen.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) hoped that Liberals would not listen to the voice of the charmer opposite, charm he never so wisely. With regard to this invasion of the rights of private Members, private Members were themselves to blame for the position in which they stood. Talk of driving six omnibuses through Temple Bar! Why, 600 would be nearer the mark. On the second day of the Session he took his chance of the ballot, and came out 243rd. Of the 242 gentlemen before him, not more than four or five who were successful in obtaining first places had the slightest chance of getting their Bills beyond a Second Reading. It was said they should preserve their Tuesday evening rights on the chance of being able to ventilate questions with a view to subsequent legislation. But how were their Tuesday evenings to be used? One hon. Member wished to bring forward a question dealing with the House of Lords. But he should remember they had already had a Debate on the privileges of the House of Lords, and he thought the time had arrived when there should be action and not discussion. Then there was the proposal of his hon. Friend below him (Mr. J. Rowlands), which was very important, but it was not new, for it was upon this very question he gave his first vote on entering the House 25 years ago. The hon. Member for Flintshire had down an important Motion for another Tuesday, and he had no doubt the hon. Member was most anxious to save that particular Tuesday. He had heard a good many Debates

on bimetallism, and while they were going on he had felt very like James II., who when he heard the plaintiff's case wanted to decide for the plaintiff, and when he heard the defendant's case wanted to decide for the defendant, but when he heard the reply he did not know how to decide. That was very much the position in which he found himself on the question of bimetallism. The hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. J. Redmond) had contrasted the position of the Evicted Tenants Bill with the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, but unless the Motion of the Government were carried there was not the slightest possibility of either the Tenants Bill or the Welsh Bill being passed further than the Second Reading. As a rule, he was not an advocate of questions of this kind being decided on Party lines, but he hoped this Motion would be decided on Party lines, because then they would be able to recognise not only their open enemies but their false friends. Of course they should have against them the Conservative Party and the Liberal Unionists, but he hoped that every man calling himself Liberal, and that all Irish and Welsh Members, would vote in favour of the Motion of the Government.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that, as a private Member he wished to remind the House that upon many occasions during the last Government he supported the rights of private Members. The large bulk of the House were private Members, and without doubt much of the important legislation had been brought about in the first instance by private Members. There was one point raised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he should like to answer. The right hon. Gentleman asked what was the Business of the House? That was exactly what they had been asking over and over again, and could not get to know from the Government. He ventured to-day to ask a question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the Behring Sea Bill, but the right hon. Gentleman did not condescend to answer until the question was put a little later by the Leader of the Opposition.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Debate now must be confined to the Question of taking the time of the House up to Whitsuntide—that is the particular Amendment before the House.

MR. BARTLEY said, of course he bowed to the ruling of the Chair, but from now to Whitsuntide the House had

certain privileges which it would lose afterwards, and this emphasised, with all respect to the Chair, the point he was making. Unless the Amendment of his noble Friend was carried, those of them who had chances in the ballot would really be cut out altogether by the proposal now before the House, and they said that if the Government had taken advantage of their opportunities, and not wasted the time as they had done, there would have been no reason why this Motion should have been introduced before Whitsuntide. He did not know whether he should be in Order in referring to the circumstances of last week, but last Thursday was lost because the Government thought proper to become the partisans of a certain Municipality. On that day which was thus wasted they ought to have had brought on one of those measures the Government wished to introduce. They thought they ought to have the Tuesdays and Fridays up to Whitsuntide for the Motions that were down for those days, and they were most anxious for, and not the least afraid of, the great Debate there was to have been on the House of Lords. That Motion was to have been brought forward by a supporter of the Government, but the Government seemed to be afraid to bring it forward, as they did not know on what side they were going to stand; and, therefore, the Government were desirous of burking these awkward questions. He, therefore, thought that as private Members they ought to resist in every possible way the action of the Government on this Motion. They (the private Members) were a very downtrodden race, and their only chances lay in the early period of the Session, usually before Whitsuntide, when they had an opportunity of bringing Motions forward. His experience was that after Whitsuntide the private Member became practically a voting machine. They desired to have an opportunity of bringing before the House those questions in which their constituents were interested, and, therefore, he thought that private Members on both sides of the House were bound to support the Amendment.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) said, that having given notice of an Amendment, he should like to say that in giving notice of it his object was to impress upon the House that the words

"for the remainder of the Session" were remarkably indefinite. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have told them something more of what was in the minds of the Government. They had got now an indefinite term—"the remainder of the Session," and they might have the experience of last year over again, with a Session lasting over 14 months, and they were to give the whole time of the House for those 14 months to the Government, because under the Motion as it now stood the Government could not only take the whole of the usual time of the House, but could keep the House sitting until next April, or any other time, and then claim, under this Motion, to have the whole time of the House, and take it for any Bill or any subject they chose. The Government had not told them even now what Bills they intended to press forward; therefore, he did not think they should have the time of the House for an indefinite period without letting the House know what further they intended to do. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he (Mr. Heneage) was more liberal than the noble Lord, and had put down the date as the 10th of August, and if the right hon. Gentleman refused his Amendment he would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he was going to sit through the whole of the Autumn? If the Government meant to do that which was generally the object for which the whole time of the House was asked, wind up the Session, why not accept the Amendment, or some other date, say the 1st of September? Unless they were told what the Government intended, he thought it was perfectly monstrous for the Government to come down, without a single Bill being read a second time, and say they wanted the whole time of the House for what they liked. Unless the Government gave them some more information than they had given them already, they ought to do everything they could to restrict the period. So far as he was concerned, he should support the Amendment of the noble Lord, and then he presumed that his own Amendment would be out of Order.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, he only desired, in supporting the Amendment of the noble Lord, to enter

a protest against the proposal of the Government. He was only a simple agricultural Member, and last Tuesday he put down a Notice of Motion on the Paper dealing with agricultural depression. The Notice did not obtain a good place, but it would develop for tomorrow three weeks. His object in putting down that Notice and in speaking now was not factious opposition, or was—to use the expression of the hon. Member for Norfolk which had now become classical—the vote at the bottom of it, but because he believed that, with the exception of his colleague in the County of Essex, no one knew the ruin and disastrous condition prevailing in the Eastern Counties. That was solely his reason in speaking now, to point out that the condition of agriculture in the Eastern Counties was absolutely deplorable.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he would not detain the House long, but there was one point he desired to mention. It seemed to him the Government, by the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was going wholly against every precedent they had on this matter. He remembered that on the 28th of November, 1891, a Motion was made of this kind, and an Amendment was moved to it. The proposal was to take the time of the House until Christmas. That Motion was made by the late Mr. W. H. Smith, and was a very modest proposal to that now made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But how was it met? The then Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), used these remarkable words—

“There is no precedent touching such a Motion as this. He has precedents to show that on former occasions, after the commencement of the Session, demands have been made on the House for certain important measures, but this was not an application for this or that important measure, but for Government business generally,”

and on that account the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Midlothian opposed Mr. Smith's Motion, although it was only a modest Motion up to Christmas, and the whole of the then Gladstonian Party supported their Leader in opposing it. The hon. Member below him, the Member for Bradford, used very remarkable language. He said—

“You have wasted the whole of last Session with your Compensation Bill.”

The hon. Member drew a graphic picture of the waste of time and said—

“You punish private Members for the mismanagement of business by the Government during the last Session of Parliament.”

That was exactly what he said now, the Government had mismanaged the business of last Session and they made private Members suffer for their mismanagement, and it was because the noble Lord proposed to limit the Motion that at all events he should support him, and in doing so he thought they had precedent all along the line.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 268 ;
Noes 244.—(Division List, No. 19.)

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, the next Amendment stood in his name, and he proposed to move it in a somewhat different form to that in which it stood on the Paper, because, of course, it was perfectly true, even under the present Standing Orders, that Government business had priority on Tuesday mornings. He should, therefore, propose to alter his Amendment by omitting the words “Government business do have priority upon,” so that the whole paragraph would run thus—

“That for the remainder of the Session on Tuesday and Friday the House do meet at 2 o'clock.”

He made this proposal in order to bring the Government proposal more into accordance with what had been the usual practice of Governments when they had taken the time of the House. The precedent of departing from the Standing Order ought not to be lightly adopted. There was no doubt whatever that if this Motion was passed it would relate, as the Leader of the Opposition had stated, not only to Government business this Session, but it would serve as a precedent for all succeeding Sessions. That was to say, that this was about the last opportunity they would have of fighting for the rights of private Members. He agreed that very often the time allotted to private Members was wasted, and the principal advantage of a private Members' night was that most of them could go to bed at a reasonably early hour, which was a strong argument for private Members' nights in a Session like the last, which extended over 11

months. If the Government had said they would afford private Members another opportunity of discussing grievances by putting down Supply at a reasonable time—even once a week for the remainder of this Session—he would not have brought forward this Amendment, because Supply would afford a much better opportunity of discussing grievances than would a Motion on a private Members' night. But, instead of that, the Government had brought forward a proposal which was so distinctly against the Standing Orders, and against the established practice of the House, that it ought to be passed by something more than a mere Party majority. If hon. Members sitting on the Government side of the House attached any importance to their own Motions which they had on the Paper they would undoubtedly vote for his Amendment. The Government had only got 18 of a majority at the best, and of the Motions down for the next four Tuesdays no less than 11 of them were in the names of hon. Members sitting on the Government side of the House. No less than eight of them had got the first or second places for their Motions, whilst only three Members on the Opposition side of the House had got their names down for Motions at all, and they had not got first place. If these hon. Members attached importance to their own Motions they could not vote for the proposition of the Government as it stood, and they ought to vote for the Amendment. He claimed that the Amendment was not brought forward from Party motives, but simply in the interests of private Members and of fair discussions in this House. All preceding Governments that had asked for further time for public business had not dropped private Members. They had taken only Morning Sitzings on Tuesday, with the result that there had been plenty of time for the consideration of public business without private Members being deprived of the opportunity of bringing forward important Amendments. The present Government, however, had not adopted this course. They had, instead, brought forward a Motion which absolutely shut private Members out, and he was not at all sure that the time they were to give themselves would be actually devoted to urgent public business. If he felt it was

to be profitably employed, he might agree to the proposal of the Government; but they had got no guarantee whatever of this. Take last Session, for instance. The Government took the whole of the time; it was the longest Session on record, and yet it was the most barren of legislation. He thought more work might be done in this House if they did not take up so much time. The eight hours day which had been adopted in the Government factories might very well be applied to Government time in this House. If the Government followed the usual practice, and only took five or six hours on Tuesday, they would get through as much in those five or six hours as if they took the whole day, and then private Members who had important Motions could bring them on at 9 o'clock. In ordinary Sessions he admitted that a good a good many of the Motions brought forward by private Members were crotchets, but that was not the case this Session. The Motions which stood for the first four Tuesdays really related to matters of the greatest possible importance, and which might be discussed with advantage and profit, such as the Indian home charges, the payment of returning officers, the question of the currency, and the depression in agriculture. Then there was the Motion, which was to have been proposed next Tuesday, upon the House of Lords. The latter was not a subject that could be discussed on mere Amendments in Committee of Supply, but one which ought to be dealt with, and decided one way or another, and upon which the Government ought to give a definite opinion. It was the last legacy of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, when he was leading the House. Had it dropped already, and become a subject in which the Government took no interest whatever? There could be no doubt that the object of the Government in not bringing forward the usual Motion, which was brought forward by all Governments at this time of the year, but in its stead bringing forward a Motion to exclude all private Members, was to burke the discussion by Members on their own side of the House of these questions. The Opposition were not afraid of discussing them; they ought to be brought to a definite issue, and they wanted the country to know the views of the Government upon them. It was

because such questions could only possibly be brought to a decision upon Tuesdays that he did not want Tuesdays to go. The only possible opportunity a private Member had of raising an important Motion was by bringing it forward on Tuesday—the private Members' day—as a substantive Motion, which could be brought to the test of a Division, and upon which the Government had to express an opinion by its vote one way or the other. Unfortunately, these were the very Motions which the Government, departing from the practice of all other Governments, were about to preclude them from discussing. The only argument of the Government was that of urgency. That was the cry they heard the whole of the last Session, and they knew what came of it. Only four weeks of the Session had passed; there might be 10 months yet to run for ought they knew, and for this Motion now to be brought forward on the plea of urgency was one of the most ridiculous proposals ever made. Would the Government themselves give effect to the last legacy of the hon. Member for Midlothian? Would they allow a private Member to bring on his Motion about the House of Lords and give the House an opportunity of discussing it? Last Tuesday the Government ran away from the discussion on Scotch Home Rule, but the House passed an important Resolution upon that subject, which he should like to know if the Government intended to give effect to? Were they going to give effect to the decision of the House of Commons or not? If not, how were they to deal with the Lords for not doing so? The House of Commons had deliberately said that this matter of Scotch Home Rule was of urgent importance, yet following the example of the House of Lords—whom they never ceased to abuse—the Government said they attached no importance to what the House of Commons might say, and declined to take any notice of this question of Scotch Home Rule. There were several Bills of a neutral character which were of the greatest importance to the commercial community and others, such as the Bills for the amendment of the law relating to Building Societies, Limited Liability Companies, and so on; but if the Government were to have the whole time of the House, how did they

know that any of these measures would be brought forward? His main reason for not agreeing to the particular suggestion of the Government was that for the first time they were now asked to vote the whole time of the House in confidence. That was a perfectly unheard-of thing. The Government asked them to shut their eyes and vote them the whole time of the Session without in the least knowing what it was to be devoted to. The conduct of the Government in the way they had hitherto wasted time was not such as to induce them to comply with such a demand—which was unprecedented—especially when they had no indication whatever of what they were going to do when they had got the whole of the time. What they had heard to-night was that the Government did not know themselves. The fact was, that a struggle was going on between the different groups who formed that brotherhood, who dwelt together in unity in such a remarkable fashion, as to particular Bills in which they were interested, and the Government kept these things in the dark because they intended to deceive as far as possible each one of these groups. He repeated that it was in the interests of private Members generally that he had brought forward this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "Government business do have priority on Tuesday. That," in order to insert the words "on Tuesday and."—*(Mr. Hanbury.)*

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

SIR W. HARCOURT: I should be ill-occupying the time of the House if I endeavoured to answer the observations made by the hon. Member. I have already stated by anticipation all that the Government have to say in answer to that part of the speech which may be called argument, and there was a great deal of abuse of the Government to which it is not necessary I should reply. A very large percentage of the time of the House has been occupied by the hon. Member. Now, his point of view is that the right of private Members is a sort of personal privilege. I take it that private and unofficial Members hold that

time in trust for the country, and this sort of claim was put forward humorously by the Leader of the Opposition that it was the privilege of private Members to have a Count-out if they liked, and that they could do what they pleased in their own time. That really is an admirable illustration of the point of view which champions of the rights of private Members take of the situation. The hon. Member was extremely indignant with hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House who, having obtained by ballot places for their Motions, have thought it right, for considerations which seem sufficient to them, to waive that right in the interests of those subjects which they thought even greater than those subjects in which they take a special interest. In my opinion, the Members who have taken that view have taken a more worthy view of the duties of private Members than the hon. Member opposite takes. He seems to think that a man has nothing to do but to think of himself and the position he will occupy in reference to his Motion. The hon. Member is perfectly entitled to take that view and to act consistently upon it, which he does very much; but he has no right to condemn other Members who take a less egotistical view of their situation in this House. As to taking the whole of Tuesday, a day on which some Members have important questions to bring forward, these Members looked at the question very carefully, and have come to the conclusion that there is something even superior to their own Motions, and that is the general policy of the Party to which they belong and the Government which they support. In desiring to further that policy and support the Government, which after all is their organ and instrument for carrying out their views, they are taking a course which, I venture to say, the country will approve much more than that which the hon. Member opposite has suggested they should follow. The Government fully considered this matter, and they think that they ought to ask the House for the whole of Tuesdays. At the Morning Sitting on a Tuesday it is quite true that when there is formal business we get on very well; but it often happens that some controversial question prevents the main business from being reached until a late hour in the afternoon, and

then the Government make very little progress. Therefore, it is thought better to take the whole sitting. The hon. Member says that the Government have a long Session of 10 months before them. That really depends on hon. Members who occupy the time of the House; and the hon. Member himself would be well advised if he would spare the House of Commons a little more than he does. I hope that the manner in which the business will be conducted this Session will not necessitate any such expenditure of time as the hon. Member contemplates, and that the House under the circumstances will not accept his Amendment.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman was at perfect liberty to abstain from replying to the speech of my hon. Friend. There is nothing in our procedure to compel a reply to the speech of the speaker immediately preceding him. But, though the right hon. Gentleman has chosen not to deal with the arguments of my hon. Friend, he need not have introduced into his own speech a most unnecessary and personal attack on my hon. Friend, who may have delivered himself very freely about the Government as a Government, but certainly did not condescend to personal invective upon any Member of the Government or any hon. Member opposite. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has repeated what he told us earlier in the evening, as to the reasons which induce the Government to prefer the whole of the Tuesday sittings. Of course, if the Government want time it is very natural that they should prefer to take the larger than the smaller slice of the time of private Members. But that preference on the part of the Government is the only argument which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has thought right to adduce against the course which all his predecessors have adopted under similar circumstances. The Government fail to understand that they are making not only a great, but an unprecedented, demand on the time of private Members, and have not realised that they should give something in return. What we ask in return is a little confidence on the part of the Government. During the four hours which this Debate has occupied the Government have not vouchsafed a single reply either to the questions I myself put, or to the questions

put by other hon. Members. We have all pressed on them, as a simple return for the immense demand they were making on us, that they should tell us what their own programme is to be. At present we know absolutely nothing about it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer recited the promises which the Government have given us, and which I am sure the Government will fulfil with regard to certain Debates on certain questions; but we know absolutely nothing as to the course they mean to pursue in the case of the absurd Scotch proposal, or as to the order in which they mean to bring in their Bills. A most interesting quotation was given earlier in the evening by my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone from a speech by the late Prime Minister on a similar, but less drastic, Motion by the late Mr. Smith. The late Prime Minister laid down that these demands on the time of the House should be made in reference to particular business of great importance. What is the particular business of great importance in this instance? They have not told us. Their language almost suggests that they do not know themselves. I do ask, in the name of common sense and the ordinary conduct of our affairs, that, before the main question is finally disposed of to-night, the Government will tell us for what specific purposes they hope in the immediate future the unexampled privilege they ask from us is to be employed. I do not say that such a statement would remove all our objections. But we should, at all events, feel that we were not wholly without guarantee as to the way in which this blank cheque was to be filled in, and that we were not voting away our time and convenience while getting absolutely nothing in return.

MR. P. SMITH (Lanark, Partick) said, the Leader of the Opposition had seemed surprised at the change in the tone of the two speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He (Mr. Smith), however, could not say that there was anything very astonishing in the change. At the time of the first speech, the ship was labouring in the sea with the winds and waves beating on it, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was constrained to make a vow to any saint or god who

would help him out of his difficulty. At the time of the second speech the ship had weathered the point, and the right hon. Gentleman was able to return to his usual and well-understood mode of sailing in his handling of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston. The right hon. Gentleman had said that Morning Sittings were of comparatively little use. Then why did the Government ask for Friday mornings? Let them agree to a compromise if they did not care to accept the proposal before the House; and if they considered Morning Sittings of such little value, let them give private Members the whole of Friday and take to themselves the whole of Tuesday. But he (Mr. Smith) confessed that in this matter he very much differed from the right hon. Gentleman. He thought that a great deal of work did get done in Morning Sittings, and, from the point of view of private Members, he thought that two short sittings were better than one long one. He would prefer sittings from 9 to 12 on Tuesdays and Fridays to one long sitting on Friday. If the Government would take the mornings of Tuesdays and Fridays and retain those evenings for private Members, they would not only greatly help in their own business, but would also be following precedent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer declined to have anything to do with precedents. No doubt precedents taken from the calendar were of no use. It was useless to say what was the state of things on the 9th of April in other years, because the whole situation had been so altered by the abnormal length of last Session and the way it had encroached on the present Session. They could not found any argument as to what was reasonable to-day on considering what was reasonable on the 9th of April last year, or the year before, or the year before that. But they could found an argument upon precedent if they looked at the number of sittings in previous Sessions. In 1889 private Members had nine evening sittings on Tuesday, and in no case did they have the whole of that day. In 1890 they had four evening sittings on Tuesday, and only the whole day in two instances. In 1891 they had five evening sittings on Tuesdays, and six whole Tuesdays; and in 1892 they had 10 evenings, and only four whole

Tuesdays. Morning Sittings were greatly developed by the late Government, and the length of evening sittings was reduced. At first they could continue until 1 o'clock in the morning, but subsequently they were cut short at midnight. No doubt a sitting from 9 to 12 in the evening did not give time for a full and elaborate discussion, but it did give time to bring forward and ventilate a subject and take the opinion of the House upon it. With regard to the argument as to "Counts-out," they must happen so long as the selection of subjects was left to chance; but it would be perfectly easy to propose a scheme by which priority at evening sittings should be given to the subject which obtained most support. If that system were adopted, it would, he thought, be a considerable improvement upon the present arrangement—of leaving the whole thing to chance. It would get over what seemed to him the only serious argument against the value of evening sittings—namely, the chance of an uninteresting subject getting the first place, and the House getting counted out. No doubt, it was not possible for private Members to carry through serious legislation, except on the most rare occasions, but it was quite possible for them to take hold of questions in their preliminary stages when no Government would commit itself upon them—when even hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Front Opposition Bench would not commit themselves upon them. Gentlemen on the back Benches could take up such questions, and many instances might be cited in which measures which were now admitted to be of great value had been first brought forward by private Members. Perhaps the most striking case in point was the way in which the present Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan) had brought forward the question of the County Franchise whilst occupying the position of a private Member. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had no right to despise precedents. Private Members had rights which the House had admitted year after year. He did not say that those rights were definable according to the calendar, but he maintained that taking previous Sessions the figures worked out very much to the same effect so far as the privileges of private Members were con-

cerned, and this formed a strong argument against the present action of the Government. It was all very well for a professional cynic like the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) to take the line that one Party was just as bad as another, and that when in power each proposed that which when in Opposition it resisted. But there had been a very substantial and considerable difference between the attitude of the present Opposition when they were in power and that of the present Government. In 1889, 1890, and 1891 Government business had precedence at 108 sittings, while private Members' business had precedence at 33 sittings; but in 1893 Government business had precedence at 211 sittings and private Members' business at only 19 sittings. Under the late Government private Members had one-quarter of the time of the House, but under the present Government they had had less than one-tenth. During the present Session the case of private Members was a good deal worse, because they had scarcely had any evenings at all. He admitted that eight days a month was not time enough for the Government to carry their business; but, as a matter of fact, statistics showed that eight days a month, or two-fifths of the whole time of the House, was not all the time Governments had taken during recent years. Instead of two-fifths of the time, they had taken three-fourths, and that seemed to him a much more reasonable fraction of the time of the House for the Government to have than that they should have the whole of the time. What security was there that the Government would leave private Members the Wednesday Sittings and Friday nights? They were entitled to some assurance from the Government on that point. In any case, it seemed to him that the precedent which was now being set would be followed in future. All Governments wanted more time. Any Government that ever existed could make excuses for asking for the time of the House just as good as they had heard to-night. Every Government that had the confidence of the House could come down and make a pathetic appeal to its supporters, and make the question one of confidence. That precedent was one which he did not think any Government in the future would forget.

Certainly, he did not think the Opposition would forget it when they came into power. This matter of precedent, which Radicals and Home Rulers might very well set some store by, because it was for more gentlemen who supported the Government than Unionists of any shade who were anxious to have an opportunity of setting down Motions, and of arguing them as private Members. It might well be that a Unionist Government on coming into power might feel embarrassed by some Resolution set down by some Member of the Opposition. They would have an excellent weapon to their hands—a certain defence which the House might be confident they would avail themselves of in this precedent of coming down without any particular reason and without specifying the purpose for which the time was required, and demanding as a matter of confidence nearly the whole time of the House. After this he did not see how hon. Gentlemen could oppose such a claim. It was because he thought the Government would have ample time if they took only Tuesday mornings instead of the whole of Tuesdays, and because he regarded it as a safer precedent—better in the interest of the House, if private Members and of the Government itself—that he urged the acceptance of the Amendment.

MAJOR DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said, that of the Debates in the House gentlemen sitting on the Front Benches usually got the lion's share. It was right that they should, because these gentlemen were to a certain extent the spokesmen for the rest of the Members. But when they came to a subject relating to the rights of private Members, he thought the House should be indulgent to those who wished to take part in the discussions. Those on the Front Benches who had long had a dislike to Tuesdays and Fridays Motions took a rather prejudiced view of the subject, and for that reason it was especially desirable that private Members should intervene. They were asked to give up Tuesdays to the end of the Session, and the hon. Member for Preston proposed that some modification should be made in the demand. And in making the proposal it was only right to point out that the Government had already had an abnormal amount of time

this year—from Christmas to the beginning of the present Session. That ought to be taken into account. There had been only two Tuesdays available for such discussions as usually took place on those evenings this year, and the demand of the Government was that there should be no more Tuesdays available. The Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer entirely did away with the privileges granted to private Members by the Standing Orders. The proposal of the Government involved a complete change of precedent. On every previous occasion when a Government had asked for privileges of this kind they had been able to show what actual time of the House had been previously spent on measures, and that that time would be wasted unless their demand was acceded to. It had always previously been the case that the Government had introduced large proposals, and that any restriction in their legislative programme would lead to the wasting of the time already spent on legislation. The present Government, however, could put forward no such argument, for they had introduced no large measures, and not a single hour of Parliamentary time would be wasted if no restriction of private Members' time was made. Such a change in precedent could only be justified by showing that the existing Rules of the House were not suitable, or by proving that the circumstances were very exceptional. They did not know what line the Government took up. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was true, had said that at present there was not a reasonable distribution of the time of the House. Why, then, did he not propose some alteration of the Standing Orders of the House? That was the way to meet the case. There were many Members of the House who doubted whether the time taken up by abstract Resolutions usually discussed on Tuesdays and Fridays was really a good distribution of time. But when they came to discuss individual cases of this so called waste of time they found great difference of opinion. There was hardly a subject brought before the House which some Members would not think justified the time occupied on it. On Tuesday last they had a discussion on mining royalties, and those gentlemen who brought it forward expressed what he might call

the official view of the miners. It appeared to be of interest to the mining industry that they should—

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member must not follow up the discussion on mining royalties.

MAJOR DARWIN said, he apologised. He was only trying to illustrate the advantage of such general discussion to the country at large. He agreed that the question as to whether these abstract discussions were useful or not was an open one; but if the Government thought that time should not be devoted to them, let them propose an alteration of the Standing Orders. But he did not understand that the Government based their argument upon that. The Government claimed exceptional circumstances as their reason for demanding the time of the House. The only exceptional circumstance the Government could allege was that they were endeavouring to force more legislation into the Session than was possible; and if that was accepted as an excuse for the Government taking the time of private Members thus early in the Session, it was a certainty that every future Government would be able to claim the same indulgence. He was afraid they were now doing away for all time with the rights of private Members on Tuesdays—at the end of the Session, if not for the whole of the Session. Still, as the present Government did not make the change by altering the Standing Orders, when they were again in Opposition they would resist a Motion like this in the interests of private Members, and so obstruct Unionist legislation. It appeared to him that they ought to deal with the question at large, and settle permanently what was to be done in the interests of both Parties in the House. He should certainly vote against the proposal of the Government if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston—which would afford a reasonable solution of the difficulty—were not accepted.

SIR M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he objected most strongly to the course proposed by Her Majesty's Government. He was not going to argue the matter out because they had already had it argued out much better than he could have done it. The absence of all precedent for the Government proposal had been shown. He felt that in launch-

ing forth this policy and in laying down practically new Standing Orders they were making a new precedent which would be followed in future years, so that practically from this time private Members' Motions would be shut out on Tuesdays. The only way in which a private Member could bring forward a question was by making a Motion, and whether they were crotchets or not their constituents in many cases had sent them there with a mandate to bring certain matters before the House. If they were shut out they could not fulfil that mandate. But he had risen rather to suggest that the Government should give some indication of the subjects they intended to press upon the attention of the House, because it now had before it a bill of fare for which all the time of the House would be insufficient. Only the other day he (Sir M. J. Stewart) was one of a large deputation to the President of the Board of Agriculture. The answer the right hon. Gentleman gave was unsatisfactory and a Motion was down for next Tuesday on the subject. The go-by had now been given to the subject. They were threatened in this respect with a great divergence from the policy pursued during the past 18 months. They were led to believe that the Minister in charge of the Department was as convinced of the utility of slaughtering animals imported into this country at the port of debarkation as they were; but the views expressed by the right hon. Gentleman on that occasion were directly opposite. That was one of the subjects that would be shut out from discussion by the Motion of the Government. He would ask the Government whether they really thought that by forcing a Motion of that sort on a very large minority of the House they were really advancing the business of the House? When they were compelling 244 Members as against 268 to do a certain thing, it required a good deal more compulsion than taking Tuesdays and Fridays to accomplish their purpose. He therefore thought the Government were making a great mistake in the action they proposed; and if they accepted the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Preston, they would in all probability advance their measures more than if they had a large Opposition struggling hard against what they had been com-

pelled to do by a small majority. Members, and especially Scotch Members, would like to know what questions were to be brought before the House by the Government on Tuesdays and Fridays. The House had been assured, on the authority of the Minister in charge of Scotch business, that they were to have a Grand Committee, and that the Government were pledged to do all they could to secure that result. The next day they had had an assurance from the same right hon. Gentleman that Scotland was to have Home Rule. They should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman's Colleagues agreed with that view; and what they really intended to do with regard to Scotch business?

*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) said, he thought the discussion had not been very complimentary to private Members. If private Members who never aspired to even the most subordinate position in the Government would have no opportunity of expressing their views, or of doing useful work, the attractions of the House would be reduced to a great number of independent men. Private Members who took up questions at present formed a very useful percentage of the House. Many not very ambitious, but very useful, Bills had been carried by private Members. A great many questions had also been raised by private Members the discussion of which had laid the ground for legislation. Resolutions had been moved and carried by private Members which convinced the Government of the necessity of dealing with certain questions, and legislation had been the result. A great deal of most useful work had been done in this way on Tuesdays and Fridays as well as on Wednesdays. No doubt a certain number of private Members got first places for questions of no importance. But that was the misfortune of the business being arranged by the chance of the ballot. It certainly was no argument against the policy of appropriating a reasonable portion of the time of the House for private Members to occupy in raising questions in which they were interested. Take the four Tuesdays which the proposal of the Government would completely cut out. Next Tuesday one of the Members for Somersetshire proposed to call the attention of the House to the Charity Commission, and to suggest that

it should be reconstituted so as to place it more directly under Parliamentary control. He saw no more useful or more practical subject than that. Since he had had the honour of being a Member of the House—now some years—he had frequently heard dissatisfaction expressed with reference to the Charity Commission. A great deal of the time of the House had been taken up at inconvenient times with the question of the affairs of charities and the action of the Commission. Then the hon. Member for Argyllshire, who had had a large Indian experience, was to have called the attention of the House to East India home charges. He did not know of a more practical subject than that. It was true that the hon. Member for Argyllshire had said he considered the introduction of the question of less importance than maintaining the Government in Office, and that as the defeat of the Government would lead to resignation he thought it better to subordinate that particular question to the interest of the Government; but the consequences feared need not happen. If the hon. Member for Preston's Amendment were carried, the Government might still remain in Office, and an interesting discussion would be secured just the same. The hon. Member for King's Lynn had also an important Motion for discussion—namely, the plurality of offices in the Public Service; and, lastly, one of the Members for Essex had a Motion relating to agricultural matters. The Member for Essex represented a constituency suffering from grievous agricultural depression; and he wanted to call the attention of the House to a phase of the question which could be very profitably discussed at the present time. The Minister for Agriculture had refused to inquire into the present rules as to the compulsory slaughter of cattle imported into this country at the port of debarkation. Deputations had waited upon him, but no opportunity had been afforded for pressing any argument upon the attention of the Minister. If the hon. Member for Essex had only the smallest opportunity of pressing this matter upon his attention, useful and practical service would be done to the agricultural community. These subjects might be dealt with in a concise way, and suggestions made of great value which would pre-

pare the way for the action of the Government later on. If the Amendment were accepted, while the Government would get the Morning Sittings for their business, there would be left an opportunity for the discussion of a number of matters which could be usefully discussed in the best interests of the House and the nation. To take another day, Tuesday the 17th the hon. Member for Wandsworth had a subject for discussion with regard to the disparity of representation between the various constituencies of this country. The hon. Gentleman represented 100,000 people, which was twice as large a population as many other Members of that House represented, and he naturally wanted to press this subject upon the attention of the Government. On the following Tuesday, the 24th, the hon. Member for Finsbury proposed to move a Motion relating to the expenses of returning officers. Very great advantage would be obtained by discussion upon that matter, which actually bore upon one of the subjects—the Registration Bill—which the Government had in hand. On the following Tuesday, the 1st May, they had again the question of the depression of agriculture down for discussion; surely that was a fitting subject to occupy the attention of the House. He must say he viewed with serious apprehension this inroad of the Government's upon the rights of private Members. As it was, the Government enjoyed not only the two days which were usually known as Government days, but practically a considerable portion of the private Members' days. The questions which were put to Ministers and the answers which were given were more or less Government business, and Government business frequently cropped up, and therefore it was unjust to say that private Members took three days a week as compared with the two days alleged to be taken by the Government. He should vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston, and, if that was not carried, against the Motion of the Government.

*MR. FREEMAN-MITFORD (Stratford, Warwick) said, the hon. Member who had preceded him had made reference to the deputation which had waited upon the Minister for Agriculture. He was a Member of that deputation, and he placed upon the Paper a

Motion with regard to that matter. He wished that the Motion had fallen into better hands than his, but, at the same time, as it stood in his name, he should like to express the bitter disappointment which he was sure would be felt by the agricultural community—that it was impossible to make any Motion with regard to this question. The reply which was made to them was simply read from a prepared document, and contained no answer to the arguments which had been advanced by speakers. They were used to such replies from the Treasury Bench. He wanted to bring forward a most important Motion which stood in his name, but he desired to point out that he was deprived of any opportunity of presenting to the House a Resolution which might have some beneficial influence upon the agricultural interest of the Kingdom.

SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, that he much regretted this extraordinary proposal of Her Majesty's Government to take away the time of private Members. These encroachments had increased rapidly within late years, and he had always done what he could to oppose them. But this case was the most indefensible of all. We were not now, as now presented, at the close of the Session, but quite at the commencement. The Session had not yet lasted a month, and of that month—he did not complain of it, because there were special and sufficient reasons—the Government had monopolised almost the whole of the time that the House had sat. Now, why did they make this unusual demand? It was not that our Rules and Regulations had proved in any way defective. His hon. Friend the Member for Islington moved a few days ago for a Committee to inquire into the Rules, and the Government resisted the proposal as being quite unnecessary. Nor could it be from any unusual prolongation of debate on the part of the Opposition. The Government would not allege that. They were allowed to introduce their Bills without opposition and almost without debate, and as a matter of fact they had made unusually rapid progress with Supply. The Government, by their proposals for a Scotch Committee, had themselves frittered away the time of the House on what the hon. Member for Glasgow called a pottering

and peddling Amendment. They had told us that they were in favour of Home Rule for Scotland; why, then, did they press for a Grand Committee? Was it for the present Session? He believed that they could certainly have got their Scotch Bills through Committee in less time than it would take them to obtain the Grand Committee and then get the Bills referred to it. The Government would not allege that the time allotted to private Members was wasted. What had been the greatest changes made in our laws during the past century? The answer would include the reform of Parliament, the extension of the franchise, free trade, and education measures. But all these were private Members' questions—some of them had been repeated year after year; and it was only after private Members had educated public opinion that Governments took these questions up. Of course, when questions were ripe for solution the Government had advantages in carrying Bills which no private Member possessed. Yet there were many important measures which had been actually carried by private Members. He might mention the Free Libraries Act. Again, the Bills of Exchange Act, which codified and regulated the whole law relating to bills and cheques, was a private Member's Bill. Even when private Members' Motions were negatived, the discussions often were of great value, so that even if the measures failed to pass, the time of the House could not on that account be considered as having been wasted. The Motion of Friday last with reference to royalties was rejected, but the announcement of the view of the Government in the able speech of the Home Secretary was important; it would clear away many fallacies and misapprehensions, and soften, if not remove, the feeling of grievance which undoubtedly existed. There was a general impression that the object of this proposal was to shelve inconvenient questions. The Government would, he supposed, carry their Motion about a Scotch Committee. Well, then they could not, with any semblance of justice, refuse them an English Committee, but they might deprive them of any opportunity of proposing it. Would they give them a day to bring it on? He himself was in charge of two ques-

tions at the present time, and he would endeavour in a few words to point out the importance they were to the country generally. They were all agreed as to the importance of conciliation and arbitration in trade disputes. Now, one of the Bills he was in charge of related to that subject, and was brought in on behalf of the London Chamber of Commerce. It was supported by the Chambers of Commerce throughout the Kingdom; it had been drafted under the instructions of the London Conciliation Board, and was supported by the great London Trade Unions. Surely such a Bill and one so supported ought not to be shut out. It was true that the Government had a Bill of their own relative to the same question, but there was hardly more in it than in the dummy which his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade presented at the Table. The Bill, as the Government had framed it, really did nothing at all, and gave the Board of Trade no power which it did not already possess. The other question was one dealing with the terribly long hours of labour in shops. It was no question of eight hours, or 10 hours, or 12 hours even, but of 14 or 16 hours a day; and most of the shop assistants, it must be remembered, were women. The facts had been unanimously reported on by a Committee of this House, and their Report had never been denied. There was not a city or town where great meetings had not been held and resolutions passed in support of their Bill. It was founded on a Resolution passed unanimously in that House, supported on behalf of the Government by the Home Secretary, which was to the effect "That, in the opinion of this House, the excessive and unnecessarily long hours of labour in shops were injurious to the comfort, health, and well-being of all concerned; and that it was desirable to give to Local Authorities such powers as might be necessary to enable them to carry out the general wishes of the shopkeeping community with reference to the hours of closing."

These long and unnecessary hours undoubtedly affected the health, comfort, and even the life of probably 1,000,000 of their countrymen and countrywomen, and yet the Government could not give them an evening or even an hour for its discussion. What were the questions for the sake of which this

course was proposed? He would allude only to those that had been mentioned in the Queen's Speech. The first measure mentioned in the Royal Speech was the Evicted Tenants Bill. Why were the tenants evicted? Because they did not choose to pay their rents. Not that they could not, but because they would not. Speaking, for instance, of the Luggacurren tenants, the hon. Member for South Kerry said that

"they were able to pay their rents, but it was a fight of intelligence against intelligence—a case of diamond cut diamond."

And yet as they would not pay for themselves, though they could, it was now proposed that somebody else was to pay for them. He would not, however, discuss the merits of the measure; but he should like to ask, How many persons did it affect? The Mathew Commission reported the number of tenants on the Plan of Campaign estates at 1,300, of whom 400 had been reinstated, leaving something less than 1,000. Yet to these 1,000 individuals the time of the House was to be devoted, and for the 1,000,000 shopkeepers and shop assistants the Government could not spare an evening, and worse than that, not even an hour. Another subject mentioned in the Speech was

"the reform of the present method of conducting inquiries into fatal accidents in Scotland."

That might be useful and desirable, but surely it was not a matter more urgent or important than many of those which private Members wished to bring before the House. In conclusion, he submitted that the Government had no case for the Resolution they proposed, and he hoped the House would maintain the rights of private Members, and leave them the moderate proportion of time which after careful consideration had under the present Rules been allotted to them.

SIR J. GORST (Chatham) said, that the right hon. Baronet had called great attention to the various measures of usefulness that had been introduced by private Members in the first instance, and had put that fact forward as one reason why the time of private Members should not be limited, even for the purpose of giving more time for Government business. He had been in the House for

many years, and he was bound to confess that during that time he had seen a great deal of the time of the House wasted by private Members. It was not the first time that a Government had found it necessary to ask for the time which, under more favourable circumstances, would have been at the disposal of private Members. It was a usual thing for the Government once or twice in each Session to make such an appeal to private Members. The real reason, he believed, that induced the Government to ask for this extra time was never stated to the House. But in former cases they had given some reason for their doing so, which, if not very readily believed as the real motive by the private Members who were affected by the change, was at any rate a plausible one on the face of it. He ventured to say that the Government was always anxious to have their movements wrapped in a little mystery. Moreover, they undoubtedly had an inclination to make as much of any little emergency which might give them an opportunity to make this request as was possible under the circumstances. What the Government most disliked was a sharp criticising of any measure they introduced. They were always animated by a very powerful object. They had to submit their measures to the criticism of independent Members of the House. The House existed for two purposes. Its sole business was not that of legislating. In his judgment, a far more important function than the business of legislating was that of watching the administration and policy of the Executive Government of the country, and giving utterance to public dissatisfaction with such policy and administration, and making the Government defend themselves in public and give the reasons for the particular measures they proposed. The Government did not like this. It was a very odd thing that people never liked to be criticised. But if the independent action of their political opponents was intolerable to the Government, still more intolerable was the independent action of their political friends. If Governments generally were nervous about the action of their supporters, he supposed Her Majesty's present Government were more nervous about that action than any Go-

Sir J. Lubbock

vernment which had ever existed. Their political supporters had so many different views, were animated by so many different objects, and were supposed to pursue their views in such a very inconvenient and headstrong fashion that he imagined the Government lived in constant terror as to what their supporters might do next. There was a very remarkable illustration of independent action on the part of Government supporters last Tuesday night, and he had no doubt that the experience the Government had that evening of independent Tuesday evening Motions had induced them to make up their minds to suppress them altogether, otherwise why should they have pursued the totally unprecedented course they were pursuing this evening? If the Government would propose an alteration of the Standing Orders so as to give them the whole time of the House, the House would, no doubt, be disposed to discuss such a proposal, and there might be very strong reasons why such a course should be taken. Speaking entirely for himself, he had a perfectly open mind on the subject, and was perfectly ready to discuss any Amendment of the Rules of Procedure and the Standing Orders of the House which the Government might propose. As it was, the Standing Orders were, Session after Session, being made into a farce. What was the good of having Standing Orders if during nearly the whole of the Session they were to be suspended. If the Resolution of the Government were passed the present Session would be remarkable as the only one in modern times in which independent Members had had at their disposal only a single week of the time of the House. Before Easter the House had to suspend the Standing Orders in order to enable the Government to pass their financial business. By way of showing their gratitude to the House for their action in that matter, the Government asked hon. Members a week later to suspend the Standing Orders for the rest of the Session. He should have thought it would have been better to alter the Standing Orders so as to give the Government the whole of the time, and to allow private Members to have Tuesdays and Fridays as an exceptional thing. Hitherto Governments, in taking the time of the House,

had done so piecemeal. They had taken Tuesday morning first and Tuesday evening afterwards. A great deal of business could be done on Tuesday morning, which was an excellent time for discussing Bills in Committee. Never before had the Government asked in the first instance for the whole of the Tuesdays, and their only reason for doing so now was that they wished to get rid of a number of inconvenient questions which would otherwise be brought forward by their own supporters. They did not want to have to continue to exercise their ingenuity in fencing with questions or to adopt the manœuvre of leaving the House in order to avoid the necessity of giving an opinion or of voting on Motions brought forward by their own supporters. They, therefore, took the bull by the horns, and suppressed the Tuesday Motions altogether. The Government could not trust their supporters, and consequently they dare not allow the House any longer to enjoy those privileges which the Standing Orders were intended to safeguard. This was the reason why at the very beginning of the Session they asked the House by this unprecedented Motion to suspend the Standing Orders all round.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): There are many arguments that can be urged against the proposal of the Government. In the first place, I lay down that there is no precedent for this Motion at this time of the year, and I have a right to speak on the subject, for my Parliamentary memory is long, extending over 20 years, and is also very active. I say positively that this is an unprecedented Motion in the first month of a Session of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) commented on the fact that this was the 9th of April, and argued that the Motion was premature. But what has been the origin of this Motion. You, the Government, kept the House sitting last year for an unprecedented period, amounting to nearly 10 months in the year. That is the cause of your difficulties now. Having kept the House of Commons sitting for 10 months you called Parliament together again on the 12th of March. You had your necessary finance Votes to pass,

and you got all the assistance you could from the Opposition. How do you recognise it? Before three weeks are over you come down to the House and you propose to appropriate Tuesdays as a whole and Fridays for Morning Sittings. You knock on the head the whole of the rights obtained by ballot by private Members during the first few weeks of the Session. That is your treatment of your supporters; that is your treatment of your opponents. I do not believe that any Leader of the House has ever made such a proposal before. I would remind the House that the proposal will not long rest here; the Government will before long endeavour to appropriate the whole of the time of the House. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Yes, that is cheered. The Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed a faint hope—and it struck me he had a faint heart—that this Session might not be like last Session. You are on the high road to producing a *fac-simile* of last Session. What is the worth to private Members at this period of the Session of Wednesday and Friday Morning Sittings? Coercion of the House of Commons like this does not lead to the passing of those innumerable Bills which are controversial in the highest degree, and which you apparently, from the Queen's Speech, hope to pass. You have concealed from us the order of your Bills. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says the order is administrative. Has he forgotten the Budget Bill, and does he think that from the nature of his Budget it will not require a great deal of discussion? Does he think he will be able to go into the Budget Bill immediately after he has introduced his Budget? It is absurd to think that he will be able to bring in the Budget Bill before Whitsuntide. What Bills are you going to bring in before Whitsuntide? Have you the right to take the time of the House of Commons and not say what you are going to do? Have you the right to leave not only your supporters, but the Opposition, whose numbers are very nearly as high as yours, in utter ignorance as to your programme up to Whitsuntide? You take all the time of the House practically. Is the taking away of the Morning Sitting on Tuesday consonant

with precedent when you conceal from the House every information they desire? I have never known of any Ministerial proposal equal to that. The proposal of the Government last year was as bad as ever was made, but this exceeds it. Yet your majority fluctuates from a defeat by one on an order for a Bill which the Government supported to majorities first of 18 and then of 15 on the Motion for the adjournment of the Debate on the Scotch Grand Committee, and on no occasion can you muster more than 24. Are you going to take all the time of the House with a majority like that? What was your majority last year? It averaged 45. What is your majority now? Heaven knows! There is another point. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the only Member of the Government who has spoken to-night. Nobody has had the courtesy to reply to the very courteous, the very humorous, the very good-natured, and the very brilliant speech of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition. I say that is extraordinary conduct. You make an enormous demand, and one Member of the Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, makes a most curious speech, which pretends to tell everything and concede everything. The Chief Secretary for Ireland made a brief speech, and did not notice a single argument used by my right hon. Friend. These are strange proceedings; they are proceedings which I have never seen practised in my Parliamentary experience; they are proceedings which will not profit you, because the Opposition is nearly of the same strength as yourselves, and in time you may find yourselves defeated. Your policy is certainly against the interests of the House. You may possibly persuade your followers to vote for you mechanically to-night; but you will find it hard to carry through the Newcastle Programme and the great Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a majority of from 1 to 15. I express the opinion which I have a right to express from a long experience of this House, and from a good deal of knowledge of its customs. You are pursuing a policy which was initiated last year of abandoning all the privileges and customs of private Members, and you are asking us

to be your accomplices in an act which is unprecedented, and which from the Parliamentary point of view is unnecessary.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, he rose principally to ask a question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He did not join in the attacks which had been made on private Members and on their Motions, for he would remind the House that there was scarcely a single measure of any importance passed by the House that had not been brought within the range of practical politics by the action of private Members on private Members' rights. Therefore, he should express his regret that the Government had taken all the opportunities of this Session from private Members. But he noticed that on the fourth Tuesday there was a Motion down to consider the question of the depression in agriculture. Unless the Amendment were assented to, the opportunity for discussing the question would be absolutely taken away. He would remind the House that there was scarcely a single Member—certainly not a Member of a rural constituency—who did not in his election addresses and speeches declare his anxiety to consider the question of the depression of agriculture; and though it might appear to affect only the rural constituencies, he ventured to say that there was not a trade or a branch of manufacture in this country that was not affected by the condition of agriculture. Good trade and bad trade were relative terms for prosperity or depression in agriculture. He had a question to put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, he was sorry to see, was always popping in an out. He thought they ought to have the head of the Government present when important questions were addressed to him, and especially when they were discussing a question moved by the right hon. Gentleman himself. But he would ask any Leader of the Government, if there were a Leader present—and he hoped the House would insist on some sort of answer—whether the Government would give a day for the discussion of the condition of agriculture in this country? They had promised a day for the discussion of several matters, including the Miners (Eight Hours) Bill; but would they promise a

day for discussing a matter affecting the greatest industry of the country? The question was—Would the Government give a day for the discussion of the condition of agriculture—a question affecting our greatest industry, and which affected every man, woman, and child in the country, whether living in our towns or in the rural districts. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that the country would approve of the action of the Government in shutting out all opportunity of discussing that important question, but the Government displayed a singular objection to testing the opinion of the country upon that or upon any other point. He wanted some assurance on the part of the Government on that subject. He had listened to the attack that the hon. Member for Northampton had made upon private Members. The hon. Member had tried his best to get out of the category of private Members, but had failed in doing so, and perhaps that was the key of the temper he had displayed, and had made him so bitter in his attack upon them. The Government were having a bit of electioneering practice that evening, but shuffling their cards would not change their hand. If the Government refused to give a day for the discussion of the depressed condition of agriculture the country would know what value was to be attached to the abundant promises which they and their supporters had made during the last General Election. He reiterated his request, which he hoped would be backed up by other speakers, and as the Government were practising electioneering tactics he suggested that they might go a step further and give the day he asked for.

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, this was not merely a question affecting private Members, but whether the Standing Orders of the House were to be put aside without any reason being assigned. The cynical levity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, relying as he did upon his majority of 24, and the careless levity of hon. Members opposite in dealing with so important a question, was surprising. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had used lamb-like language to which they were unaccustomed from that quarter

with a tremendous majority of 24. But finding that if he had the majority of votes he had the minority of arguments on his side, the right hon. Gentleman had turned round, and, like a modern Goliath, had fallen on the unfortunate Member for Preston. The hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Division had been pleased to show a great contempt for private Members, who were, he said, a farce and a delusion. They might have expected support from him as the private Member who carried the famous Motion for giving Home Rule to Scotland. Was that a farce and a delusion? Perhaps it was, and this was the more to be suspected, because having a still more important Motion for one of these very days now in question, he had now run away from it, and had announced that he was going to vote with the Government. However, private Members were not a farce and a delusion, whatever the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Division might be.

MR. DALZIEL explained, that in what he had said he was only putting his own interpretation on the speech of the hon. Member's Leader.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he was not a private Member. The question was whether they were going to try to save any remnant of their Standing Orders and privileges from the capacious maw of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had himself a very important Motion on the Paper for to-morrow with regard to pluralists which he had already on three occasions postponed at the request of the Government on the very ground that he would be able to bring it on to-morrow, which he was now to be prevented from doing. Consequently he had been defrauded. Private Members had balloted, and some of them had got forward places for their Motions, had prepared all their facts, and were ready to come down gravid with argument when they were thus summarily disposed of. His own place was not a very forward one, but he was not unmindful of the criticism of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who said that the bores always got the first places. In these circumstances, it was very hard that the Government should now snatch away the opportunities which private Members had thus secured. Having examined all the precedents from 1868

down to the present time, he asserted that such a proposal had never been made except either upon special grounds for a special purpose, or at the end of the Session in order to wind up business. No special ground had been here put forward, nor had any emergency been shown. No Bill had been named that it was urgent to pass. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had merely said that he was in charge of a precious cargo; but why did he not bring up a few bales and cases of this cargo and let them see what it was like? The right hon. Gentleman was fond of calling himself an old sailor. He (Mr. Bowles) called him an old soldier. Before Easter the right hon. Gentleman had begged for the time of the House on the ground of financial necessities and had got it. Now he turned round on his benefactors. Having like a mendicant begged them to give the Government more time, the Chancellor of the Exchequer now came forward with a bludgeon to rob them of the remainder, like a foot-pad. All he alleged was that this was the 9th of April, as though they were well advanced in the Session, whereas they were only at its fourth week. No obstruction was even alleged. It was not their fault that the Session did not begin until the 12th March, but the fault of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues in overloading the ship, and the Government could not complain if the same result followed again, for as last year, like Pharaoh's lean kine coming up out of the river, their measures had eaten up the Session, so they would eat up this Session too and be none the better for it—they would still be as lean and ill-favoured as ever. This proposal was not made in good faith, because of the necessities of the Government or of the situation, but it was a last despairing attempt to cover previous failure and to prepare for future failures. Nobody knew that better than the right hon. Gentleman himself—it was simply a last despairing attempt to amuse the electors, while it would only give Ministers and their supporters further time to make further blunders.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 247; Noes 219.—(Division List, No. 20.)

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) said, that, although the Government proposed to take the whole time of the House for the rest of the Session, they had given the House no information as to the purposes to which they intended to devote it. Last year, in spite of the large time at the disposal of the Government, the whole of Supply was crowded into a fortnight, and did not receive fair discussion. He, therefore, moved the addition of the following proviso to the Motion of the Government :—

“Provided that in each week during the remainder of the Session the consideration of the Estimates in Committee of Supply shall be set down as the first Order of the Day on one night on which Government business has priority.”

If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not undertake to give one day a week for the purposes of Supply, would he undertake to say that Supply should be dealt with fairly and at an early period of the Session? If the right hon. Gentleman would give an assurance to that effect it might meet the difficulty; if not, he should certainly press the Amendment to a Division.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words,

“Provided that in each week during the remainder of the Session the consideration of the Estimates in the Committee of Supply shall be set down as the first Order of the Day on one night on which Government business has priority.”—(*Mr. Heneage.*)

Question proposed, “That those words be there added.”

SIR W. HARCOURT: I must say, Sir, that the Motion of my right hon. Friend is unnecessary, because under the Standing Order Supply is always set down one day in the week. But I take it that that is not the real meaning of the Motion. What my right hon. Friend means, I presume, is that the Government should undertake that on some day in each week effective Supply should be taken. We have, however, shown that we are inclined to deal fairly with Supply, because in a short time we have had at our disposal I think we have made as much progress with Supply as has ever been made at this time of the year. No Government has ever been called upon to fulfil such a condition as this Amendment would impose upon them, for no

Government can undertake beforehand what may happen during the Session. My right hon. Friend asks me to give an undertaking that Supply should be fairly dealt with, and I have no hesitation in giving that undertaking. I hope my right hon. Friend will not press the Motion, as the House is desirous of proceeding with the very important business involved in the Behring Sea Fisheries Bill.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I think the right hon. Gentleman has met the appeal of my right hon. Friend in a conciliatory tone. The position, however, is that there will be no opportunity at all for an unofficial Member to bring forward any question except by moving the Adjournment of the House. At the same time, if the right hon. Gentleman is able to carry out his present intention with regard to Supply, I think the Amendment might be withdrawn.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question proposed.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said, he would like to ask whether any opportunity would be afforded by the Government for discussing the present position of agriculture, and he would like to know whether they refused to give a day?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not deny the importance of the subject to which the hon. Member has referred, but if I should undertake to decide as to the competing claims of different subjects upon the attention of the House I should inevitably become involved in complications from which it would be very difficult to extricate myself. I feel sure, however, that in the course of the Session, and practically at no very distant date, an opportunity will present itself for a discussion on the subject of that agricultural depression which we all deplore.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, he hoped an opportunity would be given for a discussion of the depression in agriculture, on the ground that the Government had deprived an hon. Member of an opportunity of moving a Motion on the subject early in May. Days had been granted for the eight hours for miners and for

other questions, and it was not unreasonable to ask for a single day to discuss the agricultural question, and so to test the pledges which had been given by so many Members.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am asked to give a day in exchange for one which I am said to be taking away, but I must question the assertion of the right hon. Gentleman, because the Motion to which reference has been made is the third on the Paper for Tuesday, May 1. The first Motion refers to the currency question, and the second to what is called "Peers' disabilities," so that the agricultural question has to take its chance after those two engrossing questions have been discussed. I think, therefore, that the demand made upon me is not a fair one under the circumstances.

MR. MUNTZ (Warwickshire, Tamworth) said, it seemed to him that the present Government had failed altogether to appreciate the present position of the agricultural interest, which was in a most deplorable condition, and he asked whether the Government could not give a day for the discussion?

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 249; Noes 223.—(Division List, No. 21.)

Resolved, That for the remainder of the Session Government Business do have priority on Tuesday. That on Friday the House do meet at Two of the clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to Tuesday and the Morning Sitting on Friday.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will, To-morrow resolve itself into Committee of Supply."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

THE COURSE OF BUSINESS.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Does that mean that the Navy Estimates will come on first to-morrow? Would it be in Order to ask a question about the course of business for the rest of the week?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; our intention is that when the Navy Votes are concluded we shall then go on with the Motion on the Scotch Committee, and immediately after that we shall proceed with the Registration Bill.

MR. GOSCHEN: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Budget will be taken on Monday?

Mr. Jesse Collings

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the question of Uganda is to be taken on Thursday?

SIR W. HARCOURT: There will be a statement made by the Government on the subject.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: Will there be any opportunity for Debate?

SIR W. HARCOURT was understood to say not.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.—(No. 123.)
COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

*SIR C. RUSSELL: In ordinary circumstances I should not have troubled the House at all with any statement after the discussion which took place at some length upon the occasion of the Second Reading, but since then certain questions have been put by hon. Members in the House, and certain statements—not of an official kind—have appeared in the public Press this morning, which render it necessary that I should make, with the permission of the House, a very brief statement. The questions addressed to me have been, amongst others, whether the two Bills—namely, that introduced in Congress, and that introduced in this House, exactly correspond. The statement has been previously made that they substantially agree although they do not exactly correspond. I will mention what strikes me as the main differences. Under Section 8 of the United States Bill there is a provision, in the event of an offence against the Act, of absolute forfeiture of the ship and the contents of the ship. In the English Bill the ship and its contents are made liable to forfeiture, but the Court has an alternative of imposing a fine for the offence not exceeding £500. Again, in Section 10 of the American Bill there is a provision putting the onus of proof upon the

accused party in certain cases with which I need not trouble the Committee. That is a matter of form more than of substance, and it is a form of clause not very usual in our legislation. It is merely a question of satisfying the Court, and the only object of the clause is to put the onus on the accused party. We have not any such clause in our Bill. There is a clause in our Bill giving the commander of an English cruiser seizing an offending ship the power of endorsing the certificate and directing the ship to be sent to a port for trial. That has been done in order that the cruisers shall be available for the real purpose for which they are there—namely, of preventing offences against the Act, and if a cruiser was obliged, having seized an offending ship, to accompany that ship into port, it would detract from the effectiveness of the cruiser to see that the Act was carried out. The only other difference is the clause which is referred to in the paragraphs that have appeared in the papers this morning. I have to begin by stating that the clause—which is Clause 7—has been entirely misunderstood by those who have commented upon it in the American Press—

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: On a point of Order, Sir, may I ask is the hon. and learned Gentleman in Order in referring to Clause 7 when we are only on Clause 1?

THE CHAIRMAN: This is a Ministerial statement, which is being made by the indulgence of the Committee.

*SIR C. RUSSELL: Sub-section 2 of Clause 7 provides that—

“Where, on any proceeding against a person or ship in respect of any offence under this Act, it is proved that the ship sailed from its port of departure before the scheduled provisions were published there, and that such person or the master of the ship did not after such sailing, and before the alleged offence, receive notice of such provisions, such person shall be acquitted, and the ship shall be released, and not forfeited.”

That clause was designed to meet the cases of notoriety which the Award and the discussion of the proposed legislation has obtained, and the clause is one which would have an exceedingly limited operation, if any operation at all. The effect would be to prevent the forfeiture of the ship where that ship had *bonâ fide* sailed without any notice of the Award, and if it

satisfies the Court it has *bonâ fide* sailed without any intention of violating the Act. In the comments in the American Press several serious mistakes have been committed in mentioning the effect of that provision. It has been thought, for instance, that it gives impunity to ships that have sailed before the Act came into force. It does nothing of the kind. The only effect it could have would be that if a ship had sailed without notice, and had committed what would otherwise be an offence against the Act, *bonâ fide* in ignorance of the provision of the Award, then as regards what it had done it could not be punished. But from that moment it has full and absolute notice of the Act, and it is debarred from any further offences against the Act under penalty of seizure. It has been also thought by some of these commentators that the commanders of cruisers would be the judges of whether or not the ship had had notice of the provisions of the Award. That is not so at all. Those who are at all skilled in reading these things will see that no option is given to the commander of the cruising ship at all. It is a matter that has to be proved to the satisfaction of the Court, which Court will deal with the matter, and if it is proved to their satisfaction that what has been done has been done in *bonâ fide* ignorance, the persons will be acquitted and the ship released and not forfeited. Therefore, in a case in which a seizure is effected, the matter will have to be dealt with by a competent Court, and the section will have no operation whatever unless it shall be affirmatively proved that there was that state of *bonâ fide* ignorance to which I have adverted. I have some reason to believe that the explanation I have now given will be satisfactory even to those who have made the objections to which I have referred, and I do not know that I am justified in saying more than this: that the explanation has been given, and that we have every reason to believe that that explanation will be satisfactory. The clause was inserted in response to the demands of the Canadian Government, who thought it a reasonable clause to insert, and the Government here, thinking it reasonable, inserted it accordingly. I have only one other word to say. It is for the Imperial Parliament

to discharge this, which is its Imperial obligation. We desire loyally and fully to give effect to the Award, and to secure by this legislation adequate sanctions for enforcing the provisions of the Award. But we are not bound to follow *verbatim et literatim* the legislation of the United States, nor is the United States bound to follow *verbatim et literatim* our legislation. As a matter of fact, I have never yet seen the complete Bill of the United States, although I have seen the original draft, which was introduced by a Senator or Member of the Congress. I have, as I have said, never seen the Bill in its completed form. There have been undoubtedly some discussions between the Representatives of the two countries, and something like approximation to general agreement upon the main principles of the legislation has been arrived at. One final word I will say. It has been stated by one of the Senators, Senator Morgan, a gentleman who was one of the Arbitrators, and who did not agree with the rest of the body, that this clause was introduced in bad faith and was not to be found in the draft of the Bill submitted originally to the Secretary of State at Washington. I am informed that is a misapprehension on the part of that Senator, and that this clause was in the draft as it was originally submitted to the Government at Washington. I hope the House will, therefore, see that the clause does not bear the erroneous interpretation put upon it on the other side of the Atlantic, and that there has been no want of good faith, and, as no Amendment is down, I hope the House will see fit to pass this Bill without amendment and give us a Third Reading to-night.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) desired to point out that the Members of the Senate of the United States saw some very serious objections to this clause, and he must confess he could not quite understand the explanation given by the Attorney General. The hon. and learned Gentleman told them that the words, "before the scheduled provisions were published," did not mean the scheduled provisions of this Bill, but the scheduled provisions of the Award. Now, the scheduled provisions of the Award were published to the world last August, and it seemed to him, therefore, an entire work of supererogation

to introduce a clause in this Bill which would deal with ships or persons sailing on sealing expeditions since last August. There were no sealing ships that left anywhere near that period. In August they knew of the provisions of the Award, and what was the use of putting a clause now into the Bill to deal with vessels which would not leave until the following January or February at least? It seemed to him that the explanation was of a very curious kind, and there was no doubt the words "scheduled provisions" would be read as presumably belonging to the Bill. He hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman would amend the Bill so as to make it clear that the words related to the Award and not to the Bill, because if not it was clear that schooners which left the ports after last August would have no cause to complain—

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES, on a point of Order, desired to know if they could discuss Clause 7 on a Motion which related to Clause 1? Such a course was highly inconvenient, as there were other matters to be raised before reaching Clause 7.

THE CHAIRMAN: On the point of Order, I have to say that we can only discuss Amendments to Clause 1 on Clause 1.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he wished, on the first clause, to ask a question which had been asked twice before. The Canadian Government were, of course, highly interested in this matter, and they had a right to know—had the Canadian Government agreed unreservedly to this Bill? When the consent of the Canadian Government was asked to the *modus vivendi* Act of 1891 they specially annexed the condition of compensation. Had they annexed any such condition to their consent to this Bill?

*SIR C. RUSSELL: I have heard of no such condition being annexed, and I think, if I may express an opinion, that it would be an impossible condition. I beg to remind the Committee, as I said a few minutes ago, that though Canada has been most keenly interested in the whole question, yet this is a matter of Imperial obligation, and even if Canada were not a consenting party—as I believe it is—to this Bill, it still would be the duty of the House to see that it honestly

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and loyally discharged its obligations. I do beg the indulgence of the House, and ask them on a question of this kind not to protract the discussion. I may take this opportunity of pointing out, in answer to my hon. Friend opposite, that if he will look at Clause 1, third line, he will see that the provisions of the Behring Sea Arbitration Award are thereby described, and this Act is referred to as "The scheduled provisions." If, however, there is any doubt upon the point it is a matter which may be set right.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, there was an important principle involved in this clause. There was a provision that Orders under this clause were to be laid before Parliament, but it did not enact what was the usual corollary to that provision—namely, that the Order should lay upon the Table of both Houses during the Session for 40 days before coming into effect. It did seem to him, if the Orders were to be placed before Parliament, that the minimum opportunity of 40 days should be given in which to call attention to the matter.

*SIR C. RUSSELL said, the question was quite a reasonable one. There were, however, precedents for inserting the provision in the form in which it appeared in this Bill. For instance, a similar provision, he was informed, appeared in the Fishery Convention Bill. Circumstances might arise which would involve a necessary modification of this Bill, and it had been thought best to have this power as it appeared in this form without the 40 days.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) thought that under Sub-section 3 of Clause 3 considerable friction might arise unless the instructions to the officers of cruisers were carefully drawn. There should be an interchange of views between the Naval Authorities or the Governments of both countries to prevent any possible friction. If the powers given to the officers of cruisers of the United States were reciprocal powers exercised by both, it seemed to him that the officers of one Power should not capture a vessel of

another Power if there were a ship of that Power in sight at the time.

SIR C. RUSSELL: The hon. and gallant Gentleman mentioned that point to me before, and I have taken care that attention shall be drawn to it in the proper quarter.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) suggested that this clause ought to provide for the publishing of the scheduled provisions. He did not find in the Bill any method specified by which the provisions were to be published.

SIR C. RUSSELL: The notoriety they have received.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5, and 6 agreed to.

Clause 7.

SIR R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, his attention had been called to the second sub-section of this clause, and he thought it would be necessary for the Attorney General to consider whether in another place that sub-section should not receive some slight alteration. It provided that—

"Where on any proceeding against a person or ship accused of any offence under this Act it is proved that the ship sailed from its port of departure before the scheduled provisions were published there," &c.

It seemed to him that considerable doubt might be raised as to what "published there" meant. There might not be publication in the port itself; and while he quite agreed with his hon. and learned Friend that it meant notoriety, he thought the Court might think it meant some form of publication, and this view was rather strengthened by the succeeding words of the sub-section—

"Such person or master of a ship did not after such sailing . . . receive notice of these provisions."

He would suggest that the sub-section should be made a little clearer, so as to provide for non-conviction in the absence of notice as distinguished from form of publication.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: The scheduled provisions should in some way be defined.

SIR R. WEBSTER: They are defined in Sub-section 1.

*SIR C. RUSSELL: There is a possible ambiguity, but not, I think, a serious

one. I will see that both points are considered.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 8.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, that by a section of this clause the Act would remain in force so long as the scheduled provisions remained in force and no longer. It seemed to him that was an inconvenient way of defining the duration of an Act of Parliament, and in accordance with precedent he would suggest that the Act should only last as long as the necessities of the Government required it. The stipulation was made that these Regulations were to be revised and possibly renewed and changed entirely every five years; therefore he should move to omit all the words after the word "force," and to insert "until 1st May, 1900." This would give them six years, and during this time they could consider whether the Regulations should be renewed.

SIR C. RUSSELL said, it was provided that the Award should be a final settlement of all questions of difference between this country and the United States, and the Award fixed these as the permanent Rules until the parties by agreement should alter them. Besides that, it suggested—but this was not a mandatory part of the Award—that after the experience of five years then the two Powers should examine and consider these Regulations in the light of such experience.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES could not agree that this was not mandatory. What was the phrase,

"The said concurrent Regulations shall be submitted every five years to a new examination"?

That was part of the Award. That was not a suggestion, but it was mandatory. These Regulations had to be examined every five years; consequently, he submitted that six years was entirely adequate for the necessities of the Government, whilst the Attorney General had made no case for giving these powers to a Government in perpetuity over the high seas. He therefore moved that the Act should only last until the 1st of May, 1900.

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Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 4, to leave out the words "so long as the scheduled provisions remain in force and no longer," in order to insert the words "until 1st May, 1900."—(*Mr. Gibson Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause agreed to.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will immediately resolve itself into Committee on the Bill."—(*The Attorney General.*)

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he thought the Motion of the Attorney General was a strong measure. It meant that the House could proceed with a Bill in spite of the Standing Order. It was not fair to those hon. Members who were not present.

SIR W. HARCOURT: This is a course which has on more than one occasion been taken, and on far less important Bills. This is a Bill on which I think the reputation of the country is at stake. It is a question of dealing fairly with this Award, and that Award is of immense importance not only in itself, but in the example which it sets. Therefore, it would be a pity that there should be any carping upon the Award when the United States are dealing straightforwardly with it. That we should talk it out might set a bad example. This course has been taken before, and I hope that the Motion being in the power of the House the House will assent to it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am quite sure that no gentleman on this side of the House ever desired to carp at the Award or to interpose for a single moment unnecessarily in the passage of a Bill with respect to which we all feel the honour, not only of the House, but of the country, to be concerned. With regard to the proposal of the right hon. Member for Bodmin, we all feel, no doubt, that the Twelve o'Clock Rule is an important

bulwark of our liberties and is not lightly to be dispensed with, but I think that if ever the straining of the Rule were justified—and I do not suggest that it is here—it would be justified on this occasion, and I hope that no objection will be made to the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill again considered in Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Preamble stand part of the Bill."

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said, that he deprecated the language of the Leader of the House in accusing any one of Party spirit in dealing with this Bill. All were equally anxious to see the Award carried out, and carried out effectively; but he regretted that the Government had been unable to place in the hands of Members before they brought in the Bill information sufficient to dispel the doubts suggested in the newspapers as to the objections of the United States Senate and the disagreement of Canada. He was sure, however, that Canada, equally with England, would loyally carry out the Award of the Arbitration Court. He could only wish that the Bill had been drafted with greater care, and that the Government had given more time for its consideration.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, he could not permit the suggestion to pass unchallenged that anyone had been carping at the Award, or had endeavoured to oppose the passing of the Bill. The Government had given them only a short quarter of an hour for dealing with the matter at this stage, though the question was of the utmost importance. If the Bill had to be hurried through it was because the Government had chosen to keep the Award back for eight months, instead of laying it before the House and having it properly and leisurely discussed and passed in good time. Whatever difficulty had arisen was entirely due to the Government. They had kept the Award in their pockets for eight months, and then flung it on the Table, and asked the House to approve of it without due consideration.

SIR R. WEBSTER said, he thought it was unfortunate that the Leader of the House should have suggested that hon. Members were carping at the Award. Feeling as he did the immense importance of the Bill, he should like it to be understood that the Regulations only had been criticised, and rightly criticised, because they were matters of great importance, and it was not to be expected that a body of men who had not got as much as they hoped to get, and who thought their interests would be interfered with, should refrain from pointing out, through their Representatives, where the Regulations were unsatisfactory. No one had carped at the Award as an Award. Having allowed the Bill to go through without opposition, because they felt that the honour of the country was involved, and that the country must show its willingness to carry out the arbitration, they were entitled to express their opinion with regard to the Regulations which were matters of discretion. He would only add that the working of the Regulations must be carefully watched, and it would be the duty of any Government dealing with the subject in the future to see that the Regulations had effected their purpose, and had not unduly interfered with British interests.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

SOLICITORS' EXAMINATION BILL.

(No. 112.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, the Bill was a Bill of only three clauses, and was promoted by the Incorporated Law Society to encourage University education among law students. It proposed to exempt solicitors' articled clerks who had taken a University law degree from the intermediate examination. It was a question altogether of internal regulation on the part of the Incorporated Law Society, and he respectfully asked the House to agree to the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(Sir A. Rollit.)

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) BILL.—(No. 3.)

Read the third time, and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.—(No. 1.)

Read the third time, and passed.

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 89.)

Read the third time, and passed.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 44.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.—(No. 97.)

Read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.

TRUSTEE ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 58.)

Read a second time, and committed for Wednesday.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. George Russell, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, under "The Metropolitan Police Act, 1886," relating to lands in the parishes of St. Pancras and St.

Giles, Camberwell, ordered to be brought in by Mr. George Russell and Mr. Secretary Asquith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 147.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL

ORDERS (NO. 4) BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Baildon, Burnley, Burton-upon-Trent, Leicester, Margate, Norwich, and Wigan, and the Port of Cardiff, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 148.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL

ORDERS (NO. 5) BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Bredbury and Romiley, Leyton, Swadlincote and Wilmslow, and the Rural Sanitary District of the Wharfedale Union, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 149.]

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL

ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Mundella, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861," relating to Bangor, Dartmouth, Littlehampton, and Seaford, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mundella and Mr. Burt.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 150.]

FATAL ACCIDENTS INQUIRY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to make provision for Public Inquiry in regard to Fatal Accidents occurring in industrial employments or occupations in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Sir George Trevelyan, and The Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 151.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock.

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APPENDIX I.

MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

RELATING TO

THE ARMY ESTIMATES, 1894-95.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty,
March, 1894.*

THE Estimates for the year 1893-94, with the Ordnance Factories Vote, amounted to £17,802,900 ; those for the year 1894-95 stand at £18,081,000, the increase being £278,100.

With reference to the statement in the Memorandum presented with last year's Estimates, that measures had been adopted to equalise the number of battalions at home and abroad, I regret to say that circumstances have not yet admitted of a reduction of the force in Egypt sufficient to effect this most desirable result.

I have again to report most satisfactory progress in recruiting for the Army. The Establishments were so full at the commencement of the year 1893 that it was found possible for a time to dispense with the enlistment of "specials," and the standard for enlistment in the Foot Guards was raised to 5 feet 9 inches.

The total number of Effectives (including India) on 1st January, 1894, was 219,400, being 2,301 in excess of Establishment.

Vote 1 shows an increase of £104,937. This is mainly due to—

1. Certain small increases of Establishment, including 93 additional men to the Royal Engineers for Ordnance Survey work, and the additional large depôts required for four regiments having both battalions abroad. This, including the additional provision required for the increased number of Effectives, accounts for about £30,000 in this Vote.
2. The growth of the 1st Class Army Reserve, which stood at 80,349 on the 1st January, 1894, as against 76,595 on 1st January, 1893. The sum taken in the Estimates for the current year has fallen short of the expenditure by about £16,000. The additional sum provided for 1894-95 amounts to £57,260.

3. Increased provision for wages. This is mainly for the pay of Barrack Wardens, who, under a recent scheme, will be selected from non-commissioned officers in receipt of pension. As they will receive a rate of pay including their pension this increased charge will be partially met by a saving under the Non-Effective Votes.

Provision has been made to enable a larger number of men than usual of the 1st Class Army Reserve to carry out a limited period of drill in 1894-95. It is proposed to call out for a period of three days' training, or 12 drills, all men who will enter on the 10th year of their army service between the 1st April, 1894, and the 31st March, 1895, with a view to their instruction in the use of the magazine rifle. The drills will be arranged so as to preclude as far as possible interference with the men's civil employment.

The recruiting for the Militia has been brisker than was anticipated when the current year's Estimates were framed. This has caused a deficiency on this year's Votes, and an increased sum of £40,000 will be required for 1894-95.

As regards the Volunteers, the number of efficient is still growing, and this fact, coupled with a largely increased attendance at Brigade Camps, requires a further provision of £18,000. New Regulations as regards musketry requirements for the Volunteers have been approved, which will come into operation on the 1st November next; it is hoped that as a result the shooting throughout the whole force will be improved.

The Vote for Supplies shows the large increase of £109,800. This is mainly due to the great rise in the price of hay on account of the long drought of last summer; coal also has gone up in price, and fuller provision has to be made for the rations of the Regular Forces and the Militia on account of the Establishments being so full.

The Clothing Vote stands at almost the same figure as last year. This Vote includes provision for the initial cost of the new scheme by which the soldier will be allowed to retain his part-worn clothing, and to receive compensation with fewer restrictions than before. Beneficial results are anticipated from the change, and in a few years, when the new system is in full force, there will be no increased expenditure over that entailed under the old Regulations.

The Vote for Warlike Stores shows a decrease of £20,400. Large supplies of magazine rifles for the Infantry have been received. At the factories the work of the year will be mainly devoted to arming the forces which carry the carbine, though considerable deliveries of the Infantry arm will continue to be made throughout the year by the contractors. On the other hand, owing to the extensive building under the Barracks Act of 1890, it has been found necessary to make large increased provision for barrack and other stores for properly fitting out the new barracks.

The increase of £43,000 on the Works Vote is solely due to the annuity that has to be provided in repayment of the sums borrowed during 1893 under the Barracks Act of 1890. These annuities will necessarily increase until the year 1910, by which date the liability has to be discharged. There remains to be raised a sum of about £2,300,000.

I am glad to say that the expenditure on the Non-Effective Votes as a whole shows a net reduction of £30,000 as compared with 1893-94. As the sum taken provides for concessions made to the old campaigners, and to the men living abroad who desire to commute their pensions, and also to civil *employés* in the factories and other departments, it may be hoped that the high-water mark has now been passed in regard to this class of expenditure.

H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

12th March, 1894.

APPENDIX II.

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STATEMENT OF FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

EXPLANATORY OF

THE NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-95.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

THE Navy Estimates for 1894-95 amount to a net total of £17,366,100, or £3,126,000 more than the sum voted for 1893-94.

This large increase is due chiefly to Shipbuilding, Armaments, Manning, Victualling, New Works, and Royal Naval Reserves.

In 1893-94 the net estimate of the numbers of Officers, Seamen, Boys, Coast-guard, and Royal Marines was 76,700. A force of 83,400 is proposed for 1894-95, being an increase of 6,700. Part of this increase (about 1,600) is automatic, and arises as the boys from the training ships (3,700 of whom are entered annually) are drafted into the Service.

We propose to enter 800 Seamen direct from the Mercantile Marine and other sources in order to meet present wants, and to meet the objections, in case of war, of having to fall back on too large a number of our Reserves. The proportion which the number of men on the permanent list should bear to the number of Reserve men available has been carefully settled, and it is in order to secure the proper number of more experienced men that we make the present proposals.

It is essential to the efficiency of the Fleet that the number of the Engine-room Artificers should be increased, and it is proposed to add 350 to the numbers of this class. The increase desired in the number of Stokers amounts to 2,450. During the present financial year we shall have entered the full number provided for in the Estimates of 1893-94. The men seem likely to be an extremely satisfactory and valuable addition to the crews of our ships.

It is proposed to repeat the increase of 500 made last year in the Royal Marines, which will bring up the total to 15,500—a number necessary for the requirements of our present Fleet, and the efficiency of the Corps.

The number of ships in commission has not been largely increased. The Mediterranean Fleet has received an addition of two cruisers and a torpedo gunboat.

The increased number of first-class battleships and large cruisers now maintained in commission afloat leads to greater demands than previously upon our supply of seamen, while for ships in the Fleet Reserve skeleton crews are needed to render them ready for service within a few hours of mobilisation. This altered but important condition of service involves the necessity of having a larger number of men of various classes immediately available. The new torpedo-boat destroyers now being built will also involve a considerable increase, particularly in the engine-room ratings.

NEW CONSTRUCTION.

SHIPBUILDING UNDER NAVAL DEFENCE ACT, 1893-94.

The progress made in the advancement and completion of ships building under the Naval Defence Act has fully realised the anticipations of my Statement last year.

Of the ten first-class battleships, seven will be in commission, and the *Royal Oak*, *Repulse*, and *Revenge* will be ready for service in April, 1894.

Of the 42 cruisers, only five of the *Astræa*, or second-class, which are far advanced, will remain unfinished. Ten will be in commission.

Of torpedo gunboats of the *Halcyon* class, three or four only remain to be completed.

It is estimated that most of the vessels not yet finished will be ready and available for service early in the next financial year. In one or two cases, to secure continuity of employment for the workmen in the Dockyards, there will be a longer period given for completion. The estimated expenditure to complete the ships built under the Naval Defence Act will be about £292,000.

In order to complete so many battleships and cruisers within a limited period, great exertions have had to be made, but the difficulties involved have been overcome by the energy and ability of those employed in the Royal Dockyards, particularly at Portsmouth.

OTHER SHIPBUILDING IN 1893-94.

Battleships.

The battleship *Renown*, laid down at Pembroke in 1892-93, has been considerably advanced.

The first-class battleships *Majestic* and *Magnificent* were begun during 1893-94 at Portsmouth and Chatham respectively. Owing to the expediency of postponing their commencement until all the circumstances connected with the loss of the *Victoria* had been thoroughly considered by the Admiralty, definite orders to commence the construction of these two vessels were not given to the Dockyards until late in 1893; it became, therefore, impossible to expend upon them during the financial year the full amounts for labour which had been inserted in the Programme. Both vessels are, however, now being rapidly advanced.

Cruisers, &c.

The first-class cruisers, *Powerful* and *Terrible*, were commenced by contract at the Naval Construction Co.'s works at Barrow, and at Messrs. Thompson's works on the Clyde. The preparation of the design of these vessels has involved many new problems in regard to armament, protection, and propelling machinery. They have been solved in a manner which increases the fighting efficiency of these ships; but, owing to the time necessarily taken to decide these preliminaries, it was not possible to give orders for either ship until a later period in the financial year than had been hoped. The orders were given at the end of December, and the work of construction is now being pushed forward.

Three second-class cruisers, the *Eclipse*, *Minerva*, and *Talbot* (sister ships), were laid down at Portsmouth, Chatham, and Devonport respectively, and a larger

sum was allotted for expenditure on these vessels when it was perceived that there must be unavoidable delay in commencing the battleships.

Two sloops, the *Torch* and *Alert*, were also begun during the year at Sheerness.

The principal particulars of the designs of the *Talbot* class and of the sloops were given in the Appendix to the Estimates for 1893-94. Corresponding information relating to the *Majestic* and *Magnificent* and the first-class cruisers *Powerful* and *Terrible* was given in Papers presented to Parliament in August, 1893.

In a few particulars the dimensions given in these Parliamentary Papers have been slightly modified in the completed designs. The actual dimensions appear in the Appendix to the Navy Estimates for 1894-95.

Torpedo-boat Destroyers.

The development of this important class of vessel has received special attention during the year, and statements have been given to Parliament of the action taken by the Admiralty.

The original intentions have been greatly exceeded. The first vessel of the class completed, the *Havock*, built by Messrs. Yarrow, has been tried with very satisfactory results. The vessels first begun by Messrs. Thornycroft and Messrs. Laird are now making their preliminary steam trials.

Forty-two vessels of this class have been ordered by contract, of which six will be completed by the 31st March.

Leading firms of builders on the Thames, Clyde, Tyne, Wear, Mersey, at Hull, Barrow-in-Furness, and Cowes, are occupied in building these vessels.

It has been made a condition in these contracts that the vessels shall be completed in the coming financial year.

NEW PROGRAMME, 1894-95.

In the coming financial year it is proposed to commence seven battleships of the first-class, six cruisers of the second-class, and two sloops.

Battleships.

The main features of the new battleships will follow generally the designs of the *Majestic* and *Magnificent*.

It is proposed to build five of the battleships in Dockyards, two at Portsmouth, two at Chatham, and one at Pembroke.

On the first of the vessels to be built at Portsmouth and Chatham and on the battleship at Pembroke it is proposed to make substantial progress during the year; on the second vessels to be built at Portsmouth and Chatham it is proposed to incur only a moderate expenditure, sufficient to open out the work so that in the following year the vessels may be rapidly advanced.

Two of the battleships will be built by contract.

Cruisers, &c.

The six second-class cruisers will be of the *Talbot* type, and will be built by contract.

It is proposed to build at Devonport two twin-screw sloops. These vessels are specially adapted for service on the China station, and will take the place of gun-boats like the *Swift* and *Linnet*. Their machinery and boilers will be made at Devonport.

Summary.

It will thus be seen that independently of the vessels completing under the Naval Defence Act, and of six torpedo-boat destroyers which are almost or quite complete, we shall have building :—

In the Dockyards—

Eight first-class battleships.
Three second-class cruisers.
Four sloops.

In private yards—

Two first-class battleships.
Two first-class cruisers.
Six second-class cruisers.
36 torpedo-boat destroyers.

The new scheme of construction for 1894-95 forms part of a complete Programme which has been arranged for a term of five years. This Programme has been settled after a careful review, not only of the present relative strength of our Navy as compared with that of other Powers, but also of the number and class of ships of war which are now being built abroad.

The distribution of the shipbuilding work contemplated has been made to suit the convenience of building in Dockyards and by private firms, and embraces various types of cruisers as well as battleships. As battleships require longer periods for construction than cruisers they must be laid down in the earlier years, while cruisers of various types will be built in the later years of the period covered by the Programme.

RECONSTRUCTION AND REPAIRS.

The repair and refit of the *Warspite*, *Aguincourt*, *Rambler*, *Cruiser*, and *Pylades* will have been completed, and that of the *Northumberland* will be far advanced by the end of the year.

The repair of the *Howe* is a remarkable work, both on account of the difficulty connected with it, and the rapidity with which it was carried out, and reflects great credit on all those who were concerned in it.

The *Howe* grounded off Ferrol on the 2nd November last. A Swedish salvage firm contracted to save her, and after overcoming extraordinary difficulties they succeeded in floating her on the 30th March. She was then docked at Ferrol, where the Spanish Authorities gave the readiest assistance to the Admiral, Officers, and Dockyard officials in charge of her. She was at once temporarily repaired, and safely reached the Nore on the 22nd and Chatham on the 26th of June.

The serious damages which she had sustained were energetically taken in hand there, and in four months, at a cost of £45,000, she was repaired, and was recommissioned on the 31st October, and is now one of the Mediterranean Fleet.

The reconstruction of the *Devastation* has been completed during 1893-94. The *Monarch* will be completed in 1894-95, and the *Sultan* in 1895-96.

The repair of the *Dreadnought*, *Imperieuse*, *Phaeton*, *Cordelia*, and *Comus* will be commenced and completed in 1894-95, and that of the *Warrior*, *Conquest*, and *Carysfort* advanced during the year.

DOCKYARD ADMINISTRATION.

During last year important modifications have been made in the pay of workmen employed in the Dockyards. Certain changes made in 1891 had caused dissatisfaction, the causes of which demanded careful investigation.

Inquiries were conducted at the Yards by the Financial Secretary and the Civil Lord, and were followed by the consideration of the more important questions by a

Departmental Committee. The final decisions of the Admiralty have been embodied in two Returns, which have been laid before the House of Commons, and the second of which will be shortly published. These Returns show the various changes made, which include the raising of the wages of unskilled labourers and of various other trades, and the abolition of the system of "classification" in the case of shipwrights and five other trades for whom it had been introduced in 1891.

BOILERS AND MACHINERY.

During the year 1893-94 a large number of ships have passed satisfactorily through their contract steam trials. They included eight battleships, six first-class cruisers, three second-class cruisers, eight torpedo gunboats, and the torpedo-boat destroyer "*Havock*."

The *Devastation* has been re-engined and fitted with boilers of the common combustion chamber type. The tubes being fitted with the Admiralty cap ferrules enabled the trials to be accomplished satisfactorily. The fitting of these ferrules has been extended in the boilers of H.M. ships with satisfactory results.

In connection with the propelling apparatus of the *Powerful* and *Terrible* it became necessary to decide whether, in view of the very high sea speed for which the vessels are designed, and the great power required for the attainment of that speed, a new departure should not be made, and boilers on the "water-tube" principle adopted.

After full inquiry into the experience gained in recent wars with water-tube boilers fitted in sea-going ships, it was decided to adopt a type which has proved successful on a large scale and over long voyages.

These boilers will be made in this country, and the orders for the machinery have been placed with two of the most eminent private firms, whose competency for the task they have undertaken is undoubted.

The *Speedy* is the first ship in the Navy fitted with a group of water-tube boilers. They are of the Thornycroft type and with engines by Messrs. Thornycroft and Co. She accomplished over 4,700 I.H.P., the contract being 4,500.

Water-tube boilers, of English design and manufacture, have been or are being fitted in a number of torpedo-boat destroyers now in course of construction, and those that have been tested have given the most promising results.

The torpedo-boat destroyer *Hornet*, engined by Messrs. Yarrow and Co., is fitted with a set of the Yarrow patent water-tube boilers, and her preliminary trials have given very promising results, her speed having exceeded that of the sister vessel, the *Havock*, the first of her class, which is fitted with locomotive boilers.

ARMOUR PLATE EXPERIMENTS.

The past year has been remarkable for the results obtained from experiments conducted with steel armour treated by the "Harvey" process.

Armour plates supplied by four firms have been tested, by and for the Admiralty. The investigation has been most thorough and extensive, and, as a result, orders have been given for Harveyed steel armour for the *Renown*, *Majestic*, and *Magnificent*.

In the course of the experiments the use of nickel as an alloy of steel for the purposes of armour-plates has been fully tested.

It has been established that Harveyed plates without nickel in the steel show resistance to modern projectiles as great as any hitherto obtained when nickel was combined with steel in plates also treated by the Harvey process. The consequence of adopting this new system will be a great saving in cost for a given defence.

By means of these improvements the power of defence obtainable with certain thicknesses and weights of armour has been very greatly increased, and this circumstance must considerably affect the designs of battleships to be laid down in the future.

NAVAL ORDNANCE.

The progress of gun manufacture has been very satisfactory this year, and the guns are ready for all the ships arming or about to be armed under the Naval Defence Act ; 298 guns have been completed, varying from 16·25-inch to 4·7-inch, the greater number being of the 6-inch quick-firing type, of which 169 are ready, and most of them mounted.

The gunnery trials of the *Centurion*, with a new description of high-angle fire mountings fitted with complete hand-worked arrangements, were recently carried out, and were very satisfactory. In her sister ship, the *Barfleur*, electricity will be tried for the first time for facilitating the working of the guns.

The first of the new 12-inch steel and wire guns alluded to in my Statement for 1893-94 has been completed and proved ; it has fully realised the expectations of its designers (the Royal Gun Factory, Woolwich), and it is now with the Ordnance Committee for experiment to ascertain the best form of chamber and rifling to be used with cordite. Five more of these guns are in an advanced stage of construction.

The new 4-inch quick-firing gun has been completed, and it has been very favourably reported on by the Ordnance Committee, and the design is now sealed for future manufacture. The same may be said of the 12-pr. quick-firing ship gun, of which a large number have been ordered for the torpedo-boat destroyers.

Cordite has been approved and adopted as a Service store, and for the quick-firing guns of 6 inches and below may no longer be considered as experimental. For guns of this class it is being issued as fast as manufactured. For the heavier guns it is still under experiment.

The re-arming of the Fleet with the magazine rifle will commence during the financial year 1894-95.

NEW WORKS, &c.

Of the large works in progress, the construction of the two new docks at Portsmouth is proceeding by contract, and is well advanced.

The extension of the Admiralty mole at Gibraltar was commenced last year, and this portion of the work, when completed, will increase the length of the mole to 2,100 feet.

At Portland Harbour the new coaling station will be finished in 1894-95, as well as works which were undertaken subsequently to the preparation of the Estimates of 1893-94 for protecting the eastern side of the harbour.

The Naval Depot which the New South Wales Government is constructing on Garden Island, Sydney, for the Admiralty, in exchange for the depot on the mainland, is expected to be completed and handed over next year.

For 1894-95 it is proposed to obtain the sanction of Parliament to the commencement of several large works, which not only increase the year's Estimates by £270,000 over the Estimates of 1893-4, but will involve heavy future liabilities.

The increase of our ships in size and number necessitates an increase of dock accommodation, and the development of modern naval warfare makes it necessary to find additional anchorage for our fleets, where they will not be exposed to the danger of torpedo attack.

With this in view, works have been begun, and are advanced, for protecting Portsmouth and Portland harbours, and preparations are being made for similar works at Devonport and Southampton Water.

The necessity for protection from torpedo attack, and for increasing the facilities for coaling our men-of-war, have made the Admiralty propose the further elongation of the mole at Gibraltar, which, when completed, will be 3,700 feet in length.

It is proposed to commence at once a graving dock at Gibraltar; this work has long been considered necessary for our Mediterranean Fleet, and the Channel Squadron, which frequently goes to Gibraltar.

For the speedy mobilisation of the Fleet it is most desirable to increase the basin accommodation at Keyham and to have greater facilities for coaling. It is also indispensable to have in the same port more docks. At the present time only one first-class battleship can be docked there, and the entrance to that dock is extremely inconvenient at certain times. To effect these objects provision has been made in the Estimates for a basin area of 41 acres, for three new docks, and a coaling jetty.

It is proposed to deepen, by dredging, the harbours of Portsmouth and Devonport, and to widen the channel of the River Medway, so that sufficient depth of water may be obtained for mooring ships and for facilitating their passage to and from the important Dockyard of Chatham.

The inconvenience of putting seamen in hulks when not on board commissioned ships has been dealt with at Keyham, where some years ago a barrack was erected. The same arrangement has been made for the men training in the *Excellent* at Portsmouth.

Admirable results upon the health, conduct, and comfort of the men have followed the adoption of this system, and it is most desirable to extend it.

The need is now most pressing at Chatham, and it is proposed to commence the building of a naval barrack for 3,500 officers and men at that place. When this building is completed the hulks, which now occupy valuable space in the basins, will be removed.

The increase in the Royal Marines has made it difficult to carry out thoroughly at Walmer the training of all recruits, which has hitherto been extremely successful; it is proposed to extend these barracks so as to give accommodation for the training of 2,000 recruits annually.

The extension of the Engineer Students' College at Keyham is most necessary, as the present accommodation is insufficient for the number of these important officers, who are trained in this institution for the Navy.

Important works are also contemplated for the storage of ammunition at Gibraltar and Malta.

MOBILISATION.

The united crews of the ships, &c., specially put in commission for the partial mobilisation of 1893 amounted to 9,425, as compared with 8,937 in 1892.

In the course of the year the number of signal ratings had largely increased, so that instead of there being any deficiencies in the signal department when the partial mobilisation was effected, 84 surplus signal ratings were distributed amongst the several manœuvre fleets and squadrons.

During the year preparations have been made for definitely appropriating Petty Officers and men of all ratings to the three home ports, in order that each port may be self-supporting and capable of manning and providing for the care and maintenance of all ships attached to it. A complete establishment for each port has been drawn up, and the numbers voted have been divided between them in proportion to their requirements. New entries from the shore, and boys on completion of their training, will be appropriated to a port, according to the numbers required to complete the respective port establishments.

It is hoped that the establishment of these port divisions will eventually provide for the actual needs of each port, facilitate mobilisation, and enable recruiting to be placed on a continuous and satisfactory system.

The changes in the constitution of the coastguard and port guardships previously instituted, have been further developed during the past year. The coastguard ships now consist for the most part of fast cruisers of modern type, while

the old type vessels previously stationed at the naval ports have been replaced by second-class battleships and at Queenstown by an armed cruiser. It has also been decided to replace the present old type gunboats attached as tenders to the coastguard ships by torpedo gunboats of high speed, and this is now being done.

ROYAL MARINES.

The increase of numbers voted to the Establishment in April last, added to the ordinary waste, rendered it necessary to recruit about 2,000 men. Without reducing the standard of height, 1,964 recruits have been obtained since April 1st. To meet the increased competition for the best men, it is proposed to hold out some additional inducements to men to join the Royal Marines. Provision has been made in the Estimates for extra payment to men of the Corps while acting as Non-commissioned Officers, as well as allowances for the gratuitous issue of certain additional articles of clothing.

Hitherto it has been possible to impart instruction in swimming to recruits from the open beach to only comparatively few of the men, the number trained depending more on the length of the summer season, but the new swimming baths now erected at the Training Dépôt at Walmer will enable instruction to be given daily, and it is hoped that this essential art will be acquired by every Marine before he proceeds to sea.

During the summer a battalion of Marines was associated with the troops of the various arms of the Service at Aldershot, and the experience gained will be of considerable value. It is intended to attach a similar battalion of Royal Marines to Aldershot annually.

It is proposed to add 500 men to the Corps during the year 1894-95.

ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

The number of officers who have made themselves efficient by varying periods of service in the Fleet is 248, as compared with 192 at the end of last year.

The lists are now practically full, and for that reason as many as 151 candidates have been refused during the past year. It is, however, proposed to increase the Lieutenants and Sub-Lieutenants' List by 50 each, which will enable some of the most eligible of these candidates to be admitted.

The number of Officers to be entered for 12 months' training on board Ships of the Fleet has been raised from 50 to 70. Provision has also been made for giving six months' training to 700 men of the R.N.R., in ships of the Fleet.

The First and Second Class Reserve Men are nearly up to the full numbers voted, and the class of Firemen, attracted by the new regulations, which were referred to in my Statement of last year, have presented themselves so readily for entry that it has been necessary to check temporarily their enrolment; but it is proposed to make provision in the Estimates for an addition of 400 to the List, which will bring the total number up to 1,600.

It was not possible until February of this year to bring into force the New Regulations for embarking Second Class men in the coastguard ships for 16 working days' training, but the scheme is now in operation, and the distant centres of Stornoway and Lerwick, where there are a very large number of men of the Second Class, have been visited by H.M. ships *Superb* and *Galatea* respectively, for the purpose of embarking this Class of the Reserve. The other coastguard ships will receive the men at their headquarters.

A marked advantage has been gained by the Gunnery Lieutenants of the coastguard ships visiting the R.N.R. batteries to afford a few days' instruction, and most satisfactory reports are received of the efficiency of the men and their fitness to take their place as part of the crew of a man-of-war.

There is every cause for satisfaction at the condition of the force, both as regards officers and men.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1892, the grant of £16,000 per annum formerly paid out of the Consolidated Fund in aid of the funds of Greenwich Hospital, has been restored as from the 1st October, 1893, for the benefit of men who entered the Service before the 29th June, 1878. This money has been applied to increasing by 2,000 the number of Age Pensions awarded to Naval and Marine Pensioners of 55 years of age and upwards.

The total number of Age Pensions existing at the present time is about 10,100.

In accordance with another of the recommendations of the Committee, a rent of £5,000 a year has been paid since 1st April, 1892, to Greenwich Hospital funds for the use, for the purposes of the Royal Naval College, of the Hospital buildings at Greenwich. By this means, funds for 600 additional Age Pensions have been provided.

In the case of the *Victoria* disaster every effort was made to provide promptly for the widows and children of the men who perished. The ship was lost on the 23rd of June, and by the 15th of August following the greater number of the cases had been investigated and the widows' pensions, and the allowances to the children, paid.

In all, pensions have been awarded to 77 widows and allowances to 124 children of these seamen, while four cases from Malta, lately reported, are now under investigation. The charge thus entailed upon the funds of Greenwich Hospital amounts to nearly £1,500 a year.

NAVAL DEFENCE ACT.

I stated last year that a Bill would be introduced for the purpose of amending the Naval Defence Act of 1889. This was done, and the Amending Act of 1893 was subsequently passed.

The Act authorised the expenditure of a larger sum upon the ships built in the Dockyards than was originally contemplated, and extended the time within which the vessels should be completed for sea. It also gave the Admiralty greater latitude with regard to the use of savings of previous years.

According to the latest information, the total expenditure upon the ships built in the Dockyards will amount to £12,222,000—namely, £9,814,000 for hulls, &c., and £2,408,000 for armaments, or, in round numbers, an excess of £722,000 over the original Estimate.

It is anticipated that the whole of the expenditure on the ships built by contract will be met out of the £10,000,000 charged under the Act to the Consolidated Fund.

We do not propose to extend to the new Programme of shipbuilding financial machinery like that of the Naval Defence Act. Apart from financial policy and other considerations connected with it, the accounts rendered necessary by the Act have proved difficult and complicated in their working, and I trust that by careful and energetic management the funds placed at the disposal of the Admiralty in the Annual Votes will secure the rapid and economical prosecution of shipbuilding work for the Navy.

SPENCER.

10th March, 1894.

I N D E X

TO

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION).

VOLUME XXII. FOURTH SERIES.

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1894.

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills, Read 1^a, 1^o, 2^a, 2^o, 3^a, 3^o.
 Read the First, Second, or
 Third Time.
 1R., 2R., 3R. Speech de-
 livered on First, Second,
 or Third Reading.
 Adj. Adjourned.

A. Answers.
c. Commons.
 Com. Committee.
 com. Committed.
 Intro. Introduction.
 L. Lords.
 Obs. Observations.

Pres. Presented.
 Q. Questions.
 Rep. Reported.
 R.P. Report Progress.
 Reso. Resolutions.

The subjects of Debate, as far as possible, are classified under General Headings: *e.g.*,

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 CIVIL SERVICE
 COLONIES
 CUSTOMS, EXCISE AND IN-
 LAND REVENUE

EDUCATION
 INDIA
 IRELAND
 LABOUR DEPARTMENT
 LAW AND JUSTICE AND
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Supply — South Kensington Museum, 1076

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MELLOR, RIGHT HON. J. W. (Chairman of Committees and Ways and Means, and Deputy Speaker), *York, W.R., Sowerby*

(Rulings as Deputy Speaker)

When it was 12 o'clock it was his duty to call attention to the fact that a Motion for Adjournment lapsed. The Motion having been made again since 12 o'clock the Member was in Order *Mar 12, 130*

The noble Lord was in Order in discussing the absence of Home Rule from the Queen's Speech *Mar 13, 168*

The Deputy Speaker could not say that a Member was out of Order in quoting the words of an English Minister spoken during the current Session in the House of Lords *Mar 13, 185*

There was no Question before the House, but it was usual to allow the Leaders of responsible Parties to make observations on occasions such as the present (Discussion as to the result of Mr. Labouchere's Amendt. to the Queen's Speech) *Mar 14, 266*

It was usual to allow questions to be postponed if the Minister wished it *Mar 15, 320*

Introduction of and Ballotting for Bills—Statement as to numbers *Mar 15, 350*

The quotations were ruled out of Order in a question because the Member was giving information instead of asking for it *Mar 16, 448*

The hon. Member, although he had given notice of his Bill on Monday, and his name appeared in the Ballot, could not bring in his Bill then, as he had omitted to give fresh notice *Mar 16, 461*

The claims of engineer officers in respect of pay could not be dealt with on the Motion as to dockyard labour and wages *Mar 19, 637*

The discussion of a subject was out of Order when there was a Bill before the House on the subject *Mar 30, 1060*

Miscellaneous Rulings *Mar 15, 322; Mar 20, 688*

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)

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The question of pluralists did not seem relevant to the Vote on the House of Commons Offices, and he did not think it would be in Order *Mar 15, 353*

It had been stated that the Vote did not apply to pluralists, and therefore the Member was not in Order *Mar 15, 355*

It was in accordance with the Rules of the House for an Amendt. to a Vote on Account to be moved, although the Motion prevented one-half of the Vote being discussed or amended *Mar 21, 803*

MELLOR, Right Hon. J. W.—*cont.*

(Rulings as Chairman of Committees)—*cont.*

When Members gave Notice of Amendts. the Chair called upon them according to their Notices, but on a Vote on Account any Member who was in possession of the Com. was entitled to move a reduction unless he gave way *Mar 21, 806*

The Chairman's Duty was to put from the Chair every Amendt. moved, and, whether it was withdrawn or not, putting it from the Chair had the same effect *Mar 21, 806*

The Chairman did not see how the question of the capitulations in Turkey could be dealt with in *Supply* under the Vote for Diplomatic and Consular Buildings *Mar 30, 1090*

Miscellaneous Rulings *April 9, 1677, 1680*

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c. Intro., Mr. Coleridge; Read 1° Mar 20, 786

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Harbours of Refuge on the East Coast of Yorkshire, Q. Mr. Holden; A. Mr. Mundella *April 5, 1445*

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"*Port Yarrock*," *Loss of the*, Qs. Mr. Provand, Sir J. Gorst, Mr. H. J. Wilson, Mr. G. Bowles; As. Mr. Mundella *April 2, 1104*

Motion for Adjournment of the House (Mr. H. Wilson) *Mar 29, 906*

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c. Intro., Mr. Neville; Read 1° Mar 19, 676

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c. Intro., Mr. Mundella; Read 1° April 2, 1216

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Dr. Grigsby, Q. Major Rasch ; A. Mr. S. Buxton *April* 3, 1247

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c. Intro., Mr. Field ; Read 1^o *Mar* 20, 787

Solicitors' (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill

c. Intro., Mr. Carson ; Read 1^o *April* 3, 1316

South Kensington Museum

Fuqade, Q. Mr. Webster ; A. Mr. H. Gladstone *April* 6, 1515

(References to, in Debate on Supply, *Mar* 30, 1069)

Speaker, Mr. (RIGHT HON. ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL), *Warwick and Leamington*

Business of the House

As to whether it was right to put down a Bill for 2R. which had not been printed, Mr. Speaker said it was for the House to judge in view of the circumstances under which it was put down *April 4, 1879*

Indisposition of

Mar 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 29, 30

Members

There was no official or Parliamentary recognition of the system of pairing. It was a custom that had grown up, owing to the convenience it afforded to Members, and it was fully recognised by all that it must be conducted upon the most strictly honourable principles, which had hitherto never been lost sight of by Members *April 6, 1819*

Miscellaneous Rulings

April 4, 1871; April 5, 1480; April 9, 1622, 1638, 1655

Private Bills

Any point of Order should have been raised before the 2R. There was no reason why the Bill (London Building Bye-Laws) should not be introduced as a Private Bill. If the Bill raised a question of public policy, that was a question which should have been raised at the proper time *April 2, 1107*

Questions

Under the Rules of the House a Member was responsible for the statements contained in a Question *April 5, 1452*

The Question was only an argumentative way of bringing forward a matter having reference to a question other than the one under consideration, and was ruled out of Order *April 9, 1591*

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The Motion was Home Rule for Scotland, and the Member was not entitled to go into the question of Home Rule for Wales *April 3, 1301*

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c. Intro., Mr. A. C. Morton; Read 1° Mar 20, 786
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SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1893-4.

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CLASS V.

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- £88,567—Colonial Services and South African Charges, Com., *Mar* 15, 405; Division, 429; Report *Mar* 16, 555

CLASS VI.

- £6,400—Superannuations and Retired Allowances, Com., *Mar* 15, 429; Report *Mar* 16, 555

CLASS VII.

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- £685 14s.—Civil Service Excesses, 1892-3,
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- Amendt. (Mr. Weir), 847; Withdrawn;
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- £30,855—Houses of Parliament Buildings, Com., *Mar* 29, 976; Report *Mar* 30, 1092
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- £59,278—Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, viz: County Courts, Metropolitan Police Courts, and Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland, Com., *Mar* 29, 993; Report *Mar* 30, 1092
- £28,614—Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain, Com., *Mar* 30, 1064; Amendt. (Mr. Bartley), 1074; Division, 1080; Agreed to, 1081; Report *April* 2, 1216
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